

# MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND NEW GROWTH INDUSTRIES

## ANNUAL TECHNICAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2024-2025

FY 2024-2025



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# Minister's Message

It is with great pride that I provide you a report on the efforts and accomplishments of the Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries (MHANGI) for the fiscal year 2024 - 2025.

Internationally, as the Russian invasion of Ukraine continues to have a rippling effect on countries around the world it has increased the unprecedented effects on the security landscape around the world. It is no secret that crime and violence hinder sustainable development and economic growth. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the region's homicide rate is three times higher than the world average at 18 vs. 5.6 per 100,000 inhabitants (UNODC, 2023). 50% of all homicides in the Americas are connected to organized crime, compared to 24% globally (UNODC, 2023). This level of criminal violence affects the lives of the region's inhabitants, as well as its economy and institutions.

As the Central American corridor continues to be abused by criminals to carry out negative acts that lead to insecurity, we remain committed to the fight against transnational criminal organizations, drug trafficking, weapons smuggling, human trafficking, and money laundering.

At the local level, we continue to be faced with gang violence, domestic violence, illegal hunting and fishing, drug trafficking, human trafficking and smuggling among many other threats.

Despite these challenges, the Ministry reports several significant strides in fulfilling its mandate of ensuring a safe and secure Belize for its citizenry and visitors. A significant achievement for the Belize Police was the graduation of Squad Intake No. 97 and recruitment of Squad Intake No. 98. Our focus on Community Policing would enable our recruits to become effective agents for positive change within the communities they will serve. We highlight yet again that a significant number of recruits continue to enter the Police Department with advanced degrees and qualifications, which highlights the ever growing technical and professional competence of our human resources.

The National Forensic Science Services embarked on steps to draft Belize's first DNA legislation which will help to regulate the use of DNA technology, particularly in criminal investigations and identification of individuals, while also safeguarding privacy and ensuring ethical practices. Once approved by Parliament this DNA legislation will involve the establishment of a DNA databanks setting rules for sample collection and usage and creating oversight mechanisms.

The Belize Crime Observatory (BCO) continues to support evidence-based decision making, through interagency collaboration with key public sector and development partners. Through the BCO, the MHANGI is leading the charge in the region by facilitating knowledge exchange programs with countries, highlighting the use of innovation and technology to deliver crime data and information services.

The New Growth Industries Unit formalized and promoted the hemp industry as a viable and sustainable sector in Belize. One of the flagship achievements was the collaboration with Tropical Health Belize to support the official launch of their company, which introduced a range of hemp-derived medicinal and wellness products to the local market. This partnership not only marked a commercial milestone but also served as a public demonstration of the untapped potential within the hemp industry for health, wellness, and economic development.

While the Ministry faced many challenges in 2024 our resounding efforts and strides to protect the lives and property of our citizenry, in assisting other key agencies and stakeholders, and in providing the best quality services to the public was without fail. We will continue to expand on our existing efforts in ensuring results-oriented service to the people of Belize and creating the kind of opportunities our people deserve.



**Hon. Kareem Musa**

**Minister of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries**

# Abbreviations

BCO	Belize Crime Observatory
BCP	Belize Central Prison
BPD	Belize Police Department
CABEI	Central American Bank for Economic Integration
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CIRT	Critical Infrastructure Response Team
COVID	Coronavirus Disease
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
DPP	Director of Public Prosecutions
DYS	Department of Youth Services
FACB	Firearms and Ammunition Control Board
FSC	Financial Services Commission
GoB	Government of Belize
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INL	International Narcotics and Law Enforcement
KHMH	Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital
LIU	Leadership Intervention Unit
MEO	Medical Examiner's Office
MHANGI	Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries
MIT	Mobile Interdiction Team
MLDI COP	Medicolegal Death Investigation International Community of Practice
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFSS	National Forensic Science Services
NGI	New Growth Industries
NPTA	National Police Training Academy
OW	Orange Walk
RIBIN	Regional Integrated Ballistic Information Network
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SICA	Central American Integration System
SOC	Scenes of Crime
SOE	State of Emergency
UB	University of Belize
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# Executive Summary

In the context of #planBelize 2.0, citizen security and public safety are considered the main challenges that threaten a country's growth, and Belize is no exception to this challenge. During the year 2024, the Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries (MHANGI) undertook initiatives that would rethink approaches of tackling crime and violence to improve citizen security and public safety by utilizing evidence-based analysis for innovative policy making.

As it relates to annual crime data, during the year under review, a total of 1,062 major crimes (i.e., murder, rape, robbery, burglary, theft, and unlawful sexual intercourse) were reported. This represented a decrease of 25, when compared to 2023 which reported 1,087. Of these major crimes, murders increased by 2 in 2024 (97) when compared to 2023 (87). Intelligence indicated that internal gang feuds, the high demand for drugs and retaliatory shootings are attributed to gang-related crime and violence. Additionally, other crimes associated with gang activities included, aggravated assaults, and robberies.

Through the Leadership Intervention Unit, the Ministry has made targeted actions at providing opportunities for at-risk youths. These youths now benefit from skills training opportunities and educational programs. The mediation and conflict resolution programs also serve as violence interrupters that positively impact the prevention of crime in escalated situations.

The MHANGI will continue to support the successful implementation of #planBelize 2.0 into 2025, utilizing evidence-based information for policy making and continue its efforts of creating innovative opportunities in new and emerging industries via the new growth industries. The MHANGI through its NFSS will see the formalization of DNA legislation and use of Rapid DNA.

To strengthen regulatory framework on firearms management, the work of the Firearms and Ammunition Control Board (FACB) has proven beneficial. Strict application procedures have been adopted and adhered to. As FACB continues its efforts, it will acquire an integrated digital firearms management system with the support of CARICOM as well as a firearms marking machine to support accountability by and between the Board and its stakeholders.



# Chapters

## 1. Introduction

This Report provides a synopsis of the achievements, challenges and the way forward for the MHANGI and its departments for the period of fiscal year 2024-2025. The Departments and Units of the Ministry include:

- Belize Police Department (BPD)
- National Forensic Science Services (NFSS)
- Belize Crime Observatory (BCO)
- Belize Central Prison (BCP)
- Leadership Intervention Unit (LIU)
- New Growth Industries (NGI)
- Firearms and Ammunition Control Board (FACB)

## 2. Mission Statement and Priorities

### **Vision Statement:**

A safe, secure, and prosperous nation fostered through collaboration, innovation, and data-driven processes to ensure social justice, sustainable growth, and economic sovereignty.

### **Mission Statement:**

Ensure safety and security, promote innovation and prosperity through collaboration with the public and private sectors, civil society, and all communities. Utilize advanced systems, maintain law and order, ensure citizen security, champion emerging industries and the government's demand for sustainable growth for Belize.

**Priorities:**

1. To maintain public order by responding to/and managing incidents of property crimes, domestic violence, and other crimes against persons, to reduce their impacts on the community.
2. To promote safer communities through a multi-sectorial approach to alleviate gang related activities.
3. To ensure evidence-based policies and actions, in support of citizen security, including law and order, delivery of justice, and satisfactory redress to victims of crimes.
4. To strengthen inter-agency, regional and international collaboration, and cooperation.
5. To strengthen firearms regulations and management.
6. To provide evidence for identification of suspects involved in alleged crimes.
7. To provide reliable and objective scientific evidence based on established forensic principles.
8. To develop public policies that address citizen security through a comprehensive crime data and information system.
9. To create private sector jobs for the Belizean people with the introduction of new and emerging industries.
10. To engage local, regional, and international investors in the development and introduction of successful new and emerging industries in Belize.
11. To establish, implement, and enforce the highest standards and regulations for the efficient management of new and emerging industries and to ensure quality, consistency, and compliance through efficient monitoring systems to be established by the Ministry.

# 3. Main Achievements



## 3.1 Ministry Headquarters

### Key Results Achieved in Fiscal Year 2024 – 2025

#### 1. Formulation of the Ministry's 5-year Strategic Plan:

With the support of UNDP via the EU PACE Justice Programme, the Ministry was able to formulate and finalize its 5-year Strategic Plan for 2025 – 2030. The six (6) Pillars of the Strategy are:

- a. Good Governance (Improved Accountability, Legitimacy, Transparency and Integrity)
- b. Public Safety and Security (Prevent and Reduce Crime)
- c. Innovation and Technological Advancement (Modernization of Services)
- d. Economic Transformation and Growth
- e. Communication and Community Engagement
- f. Coordination and Collaboration (Inter-agency, Regional and International collaboration and cooperation)

Having finalized the Strategic Plan, the Ministry now has a targeted Action Plan for which we will continue to work and deliver while contributing to our guiding policy framework of #planBelize 2.0 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

#### 2. Improvements to police infrastructure:

The renovation of several police stations and substations countrywide is a comprehensive effort aimed at enhancing the infrastructure that supports law enforcement operations. This initiative involves refurbishing existing facilities to improve functionality, efficiency, and overall working conditions for police officers.

Stations that were retrofitted include the Santa Cruz Police Station, Police Training Academy Command Quarters, Mahogany Street Police Sub-Station, the Lopez Mateo Park Police Booth, Caribbean Shores Police Station, Mesopotamia Police Station, Sand Hill Police Station Bermudan Landing Police Station, Vista Delmar Police Booth, Orange Walk Town Police Station, Blue Creek Police Station, Douglas Police Station, And Caledonia Police Station.

The renovation of police stations and substations countrywide is a critical investment in the infrastructure that supports law enforcement efforts. By upgrading facilities and improving working conditions, this initiative aims to enhance the effectiveness and professionalism of the police force, ultimately contributing to improved public safety and security.

### **3. Child-friendly spaces in Police Stations assessment:**

As a collaborative effort with UNICEF, the Ministry undertook site visits to several district police stations that currently have child friendly spaces. Child-friendly spaces in police stations are designated areas designed to make children feel safe, calm, and comfortable when interacting with law enforcement. These spaces aim to reduce trauma and respect children's rights and dignity when they encounter the law and are physically separated from areas associated with detention to avoid further distress. The intent of the visits was to get input from commanders on the benefits of these spaces and look at ways to improve and roll out more child-friendly spaces in other locations with the help of our UN partners. Providing these child-friendly spaces not only reduces trauma but also contributes to children being more willing to cooperate with police when they feel safe and comfortable.





## **3.2 Belize Police Department**

### **Mission Statement**

The BPD working in partnership with all communities: to help prevent and reduce crime, to detect and prosecute crime, and to enhance the quality of life, for a safer Belize. Their philosophy is that they shall devote themselves to uphold the safeguards of the Constitution having regard for the rights and dignity of all persons, through the instrument of law, and the concern for order, working in partnership with the people, and in co-operation with Law Enforcement Agencies, we vow to protect the welfare of the state from threat and fear of crime.

### **Vision Statement**

The BPD shall work collaboratively with all communities to foster the highest level of trust, confidence, and safety, through effective community policing and problem-solving strategies.

The BPD seek to reduce and prevent crime by employing intelligence-led policing, technology-driven strategies, effective investigation and prosecution of crimes and proactive and preventive patrols of our cities, towns and highways while adhering to the rule of law and respecting individual rights.

The BPD aim to enhance the quality of life by creating safer neighbourhoods, while maintaining the highest stand of integrity and accountability.

### **BPD Key Results achieved in fiscal Year 2024 – 2025**

During the Fiscal Year 2024 – 2025, the BPD has demonstrated remarkable efficiency in combating illicit activities, enhancing personnel capabilities through targeted training, and acquiring critical resources to bolster law enforcement efforts by analyzing trends, and implementing targeted actions.

#### **1. Graduation of Recruit Squad #97 and Enlistment of Recruit Squad #98**

On April 19th, 2024, Police Recruit Squad 97, with a total of 213 members were officially welcomed into the Belize Police Department after a passing out ceremony at the National Police Training Academy in Belmopan City. This increased police presence and additional patrols in our communities will help to foster improved communication with our communities leading to a safer Belize. In November 2024, Police Recruit Squad 98 entered the National Police Training Academy for training and are expected to graduate as police constables in June 2025.

## **2. Arrests and Seizures:**

Law enforcement agencies conducted 479 arrests linked to drug trafficking, illegal firearms possession, and other criminal activities. These operations led to significant confiscations, including:

- 756 kg (756,068.34 grams) of cannabis
- 6,185.25 grams of crack cocaine
- 12,460.39 grams of cocaine
- 20,955 grams of methamphetamine
- 139 firearms and 3,532 rounds of ammunition
- 1,300 coca plants, and
- 136 undocumented immigrants apprehended

A comparative analysis with 2023 data reveals a 30.5% increase in arrests and drug seizures, underscoring the intensified efforts to dismantle criminal networks.

## **3. Crime comparative for 2024 vs 2023:**

From January to December 2024, the Belize Police Department recorded 1,062 Major Crimes. This represents a total of 231 fewer major crimes when compared to the same period in 2023. A State of Emergency (SOE) took effect on June 24, 2024, in parts of the Belize and Cayo Districts. This SOE ran for a period of 90 days, concluding in September 2024. This policy decision could be a contributing factor that led to the decrease in major crimes. The Belize District accounted for 44% (39) of the murder incidents recorded from January to December 2024, reflecting a decrease of 32% (18) compared to the same period in 2023. The Orange Walk and Toledo Districts also reflected a decrease of 57% (4) and 50% (1) in murder incidents, respectively. The Cayo District accounted for 24% (21) of the Murder incidents recorded from January to December 2024, which reflected an increase of 62% (8) in murder incidents compared to the same period in 2023. The Corozal and Stann Creek Districts reflected an increase of 350% (7) and 167% (10), respectively.

**Table 1. Reports for major crimes for 2021 to 2024**

MAJOR CRIMES REPORT				
Major Crimes	2021	2022	2023	2024
Murders	125	113	87	89
Rapes	12	24	34	33
Robberies	167	183	170	154
Burglaries	456	558	628	593
Thefts (value of BZ\$5,000.00 and above)	77	97	118	142
Unlawful sexual intercourse	46	60	50	51
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>1,035</b>	<b>1,087</b>	<b>1,062</b>

#### **4. Personnel Training and Development:**

To ensure operational readiness and professionalism, 44 specialized training sessions were conducted, covering a wide range of critical areas:

- a. Financial Literacy and Fraud Investigation – Enhancing fiscal responsibility and investigative techniques.
- b. Narcotics and Synthetic Drug Detection – Strengthening capabilities in identifying and intercepting illicit substances.
- c. Human Trafficking and Smuggling Prevention – Regional collaborations with Colombia, Guatemala, and El Salvador.
- d. Tactical and Special Forces Training – Including QRT, SOTF, and Jungle Warfare courses.
- e. Cybercrime and Digital Forensics – Cellebrite training and financial crime investigations.
- f. Judicial and Legal Procedures – Ensuring adherence to legal standards in law enforcement operations.

These programs have significantly improved operational efficiency and interagency coordination.

#### **5. Resource Acquisition and Allocation:**

In alignment with the National Policing Strategy 2024, multiple operational units received advanced equipment to enhance their effectiveness:

- a. Mobile Interdiction Team (MIT) & Special Patrol Unit (SPU) – Each received 2 drones and 6 dashboard cameras.
- b. US Embassy–Supplied Resources – Including printers, laptops, ground sensors, motorcycles, and office equipment.
- c. Tourism Police Unit – Installation of CCTV cameras in key tourist areas.
- d. K-9 Unit – Provision of desktop computers and printers for improved record-keeping.
- e. Additionally, Operation Douglas Clause (Northern Ops) has been reinforced with:
  - 2 new Isuzu D-Max 4x4 trucks
  - Advanced drones (DJI Mavic 3 Classic & Evo Max Nuttel 3D)
  - Protective gear (bulletproof vests, body cameras, GPS devices, etc.)

These resources have significantly enhanced surveillance, interdiction, and rapid response capabilities.

## Challenges and Recommendations

Challenge	Recommendation
<b>Conditions of service</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. While the Ministry has prioritized overall welfare and completed renovations for several stations, it will continue to invest in renovating additional police stations, and barracks.</li> <li>b. Expand access to the Lotus Center focusing on officers’ mental wellbeing.</li> <li>c. Conduct a needs assessment of current inventory of vehicles, communication equipment, firearms, and accoutrements with the intent to purchase and distribute to the various Units per their needs.</li> </ul>
<b>International training and duty leave</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Implement an internal policy to address the process of recommending and seeking approval of duty leave, and ensuring officers submit their back to office reports.</li> </ul>
<b>Criminal Records Office - weekly court returns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Implement internal mechanisms to ensure formations submit weekly court returns that are needed to ensure criminal files are updated especially since the Department will be rolling out the Criminal Records Online system that will allow applicants to apply for and receive their criminal record online.</li> </ul>
<b>K9 Unit - lack of resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Train additional Officers so that existing officers can be transferred to other Units to allow for upward career development.</li> <li>b. Acquire proper ventilated vehicles that meet the needs of transporting the dogs.</li> <li>c. Invest in acquiring and training a K9 fleet of dogs.</li> </ul>





## 3.3 National Forensic Science Services

### Mission Statement

Timely and cost-effective administration of justice by providing reliable and objective scientific evidence based on established forensic principles.

### Vision Statement

To become a fully functional, independent, and accredited forensic department providing comprehensive analysis of scientific evidence done by qualified staff to assist in the administration of justice to exonerate the innocent and convict the guilty.

### Core Values

#### 1. Impartiality

We do not favour one person or group over another, acknowledging that discrimination increases feelings of injustice and makes our jobs harder to do.

#### 2. Scientific Objectivity

We do not allow personal feelings, beliefs, or opinions to unfairly influence our actions in any situation, but rather we assess each situation based on its own merits and the observable facts.

#### 3. Confidentiality

We respect every individual's right to privacy, whether living, deceased, accused or victim, and we handle all sensitive information securely.

#### 4. Integrity

We conduct ourselves in a manner that demonstrates good judgment, trustworthiness, and steadfastness.

#### 5. Competence

We practice within our respective areas of expertise and continually develop and enhance our professional capacity.

#### 6. Collaboration

We strive to evolve together, helping and supporting each other for the greater good.

#### 7. Accountability

We are committed to diligence in the performance of our responsibilities by providing service to all with the right attitude and behaviour.

## 8. Respect

We exhibit politeness, due regard, and empathy to all.

## Objective

The Belize National Forensic Science Service (NFSS) serves all law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system by providing forensic science services ranging from crime scene inspection, processing and documentation, medicolegal post-mortem examinations, anthropological examination of human remains, and laboratory analysis of serology, toxicology, firearms and seized drugs cases.

## NFSS Key Results achieved in Fiscal Year 2024 – 2025

Listed below are summaries of highlighted accomplishments at the NFSS for the fiscal year 2024–2025

- 1. Revised the Department Quality Manual and conducted internal audits of Forensic Laboratory and Scenes of Crime Belize City** to gather objective evidence of conformance to quality system requirements and ISO standards for forensic service providers.
- 2. Underwent external assessments** by the United States' Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) of Scenes of Crime Belize City Office and the Forensic Laboratory to measure progress toward meeting accreditation requirements.
- 3. Updated several department policies** on security, records retention and evidence retention and issued new policies on Rapid DNA.
- 4. Participated in international proficiency testing** for Forensic Analysts in Firearms Examination, Seized Drugs Analysis, Toxicology Analysis and Latent Print Processing.
- 5. Finalized agreement with University of Belize** to acquire 12-acre property in Belmopan to construct new forensic laboratory and forensic morgue.
- 6. Commenced net weight reporting** for seized drugs cases.
- 7. Purchased and installed a second ballistic comparison microscope** at the Forensic Laboratory. This will allow us to double our efforts at simultaneously comparing the microscopic marks on bullets and cartridge cases, enabling forensic scientists to determine if a bullet or cartridge case was fired from a specific firearm. This comparison helps link evidence found at a crime scene to a particular gun, aiding in investigations

**8. Purchased and installed a Rapid HIT ID System** to expand scope into rapid DNA testing to rapidly generate DNA profiles for forensic analysis, particularly in law enforcement settings. This allows for quicker suspect identification and potentially prevents further crimes by providing faster investigative lead.

**9. Launched histopathology service as ancillary testing for medicolegal death investigations.** This will allow the Medical Examiners' Office to provide microscopic insights into cause and manner of death, confirm macroscopic autopsy findings, and resolve discrepancies in macroscopic findings and offers detailed information about cellular and tissue level changes, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the events leading to death or injury.

**10. Sexual Assault Training for Medical Practitioners:** in April of 2024 the NFSS executed a three-day training on the management of sexual assault for medical practitioners. This initiative was a part of the EU PACE Justice Programme which aims to support Belize in reducing the backlog of criminal justice cases by providing integrated software, hardware, capacity building and legislative support that will impact the root causes of the backlog.

During the 3-days, participants covered the multifaceted aspects of sexual assault response, including the general principles and concepts, conducting the forensic evaluation, after-care, and analysis and documentation of the forensic evaluation. Participants also explored trauma-informed approaches that prioritize survivors' autonomy, dignity, and emotional safety. A total of twenty-one medical officers from across the country, two forensic pathologists and two medical officers of the Belize Defence Force participated in the training exercise.

**11. Delivered forensic training for Criminal Justice Stakeholders** at the 1st Judicial Education Institute Conference organized by the Senior Courts of Belize.

**12. Development of Belize's first DNA Bill:** Via the EU PACE Justice Project, the NFSS embarked on steps to develop Belize's First DNA Bill. Based on stakeholder consultations held and input received, amendments to draft DNA Bill were made and the final recommendation provided to the MHANGI. Next steps include getting the Attorney General's Ministry to provide further advice on the DNA Bill for onward submission to Parliament.

**13. Continued international certification program for Belize's Crime Scene Technicians.** International certification for our crime scene technicians primarily aims to ensure standardized procedures, improve evidence handling, and enhance international collaboration in forensic investigations. It further ensures that our crime scene technicians adhere to globally recognized standards, promoting consistency in evidence collection, documentation, and analysis, which is crucial for reliable forensic investigations.

**14. New Scenes of Crime Field Office for Dangriga:** with support via the INL, US Embassy, the NFSS commenced the construction phase of the INL-funded project to supply a new Scenes of Crime Field Office for Dangriga.

**15. Received a utility terrain vehicle** through EU PACE Justice Project to support processing of crime scenes on San Pedro Ambergris Caye.

### **Challenges:**

**1. Adequate office space:** For some time, the NFSS has expressed the need for adequate office space to house Scenes of Crime personnel and equipment. The only location with adequate space is the office located in San Ignacio Town which the NFSS owns, the Belize District and in Belmopan which the GoB rents. At all other locations Scenes of Crime personnel are accommodated with inadequate office space at police stations. To alleviate this challenge in the upcoming fiscal year, the NFSS will receive a newly constructed office space in Dangriga with the support of INL, US Embassy. The NFSS has also acquired land in Belmopan via a MOU with the University of Belize, that will be used to construct and eventually relocate the NFSS headquarters from Ladyville to Belmopan.

**2. Vehicles:** As it relates to vehicles, Scenes of Crime personnel have access to one vehicle only in each jurisdiction. Often times personnel must rely on the support of police officers to transport them to crime scenes. To remedy this challenge, the NFSS will prepare a phased-approach plan to acquire additional vehicles and replace those that are not in proper working condition.





## 3.4 Belize Central Prison

### Overview

On August 1, 2002, Kolbe Foundation, a non-profit, non-governmental organization formed by a Rotarian businessman was given an opportunity to manage the Belize Central Prison (BCP) on behalf of the government and country of Belize. This was undertaken with the Mission Statement **“To Provide a Secure, Humane Facility Geared Towards Meaningful Rehabilitation and Successful Reintegration.”**

The Belize Central Prison is proud to announce for the fourth consecutive year since 2021, there were zero (0) escapes from the compound. Highlighting the high-level security measures set in place for the safety of Kolbe’s civilian employees and the country at-large. The year 2024 ended with no type of prison disturbance experienced.

During the year 2024, Kolbe Foundation, the Controller’s Office, the Parole Board, the Parole Unit and the Visiting Justices worked closely together to provide inmates with effective and measurable educational, vocational and substance abuse treatment programs that would enrich their lives. These programs were based on the need of each individual inmate’s behavioural trait, their perceived priorities, and their release date.

Under the management of the Kolbe Foundation, the Belize Central Prison has undergone significant improvements and modernization efforts. These include enhancements to the physical infrastructure, such as the renovation of the Control/Search Area, which is vital for the admission and discharge processes of inmates. Additionally, the prison has implemented various programs and initiatives aimed at addressing the needs of inmates, including education, vocational training, and counselling services.

Kolbe Foundation's management of the Belize Central Prison emphasizes the importance of maintaining a safe and secure environment for both inmates and staff. Through its efforts, the foundation seeks to contribute positively to the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders, ultimately aiming to reduce recidivism rates and promote a safer society.

During the year most of the inmate population were engaged in the various rehabilitation programs such as the ARC Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program, Gang Affiliation and Intervention Program, RACHEL and IFFB Spiritual Journey to Freedom.

## **BCP Key Results achieved in Fiscal Year 2024 - 2025**

### **1. Research on recidivism:**

Research on recidivism was carried out during August and October 2024 by Dr. Terrence Alladin, Associate Professor, Criminal Justice, Department of Social Science, Lebanon Valley College, Annville, Pennsylvania, USA. Following the research, Dr. Alladin presented his findings at the Prison on November 1, 2024, at an event entitled: "BEYOND BARS," under the theme, "Exploring Recidivism, Peace-making Criminology, and Restorative Justice at Belize Central Prison." Dr. Alladin's findings revealed Belize's recidivism rate at a remarkable low of 16%, placing Belize ahead of Finland, which boasts 20%.

### **2. Prison Contraband and Violence:**

During the reporting period, the Prison management remained committed to humanitarian causes, as well as their mandate under the contract with the Government of Belize. The Prison maintained good order, control, and discipline amongst inmates and staff by adhering to and enforcing the Prison rules, policies, procedures, and protocols.

Illegal drugs and cell phones were kept to a bare minimum of 60 grams of cannabis and 3 cell phones, being confiscated respectively. As it pertains to the use of drugs in the Prison, random drug testing showed that the remanded population continued to have a higher positivity rate for drug use, both THC (or tetrahydrocannabinol found in cannabis) and cocaine, when compared to the convicted population. Of the 920 inmates tested during 2024, 664 were convicted whilst 256 were remanded. Of the convicted inmates, 135 (20%) tested positive, whilst 94 (37%) of the remanded population tested positive for drug use.





## 3.5 Belize Crime Observatory

The Belize Crime Observatory (BCO) was established in October 2016 to “foster the development of public policies that address public safety and national security issues through the collection, analysis and dissemination of quality, timely and multidimensional data on crime and violence trends in the country.” The BCO is a national repository for the secure storage of comprehensive, multi-dimensional data relating to crime. Data stored by the Observatory is collected from relevant sources and processed to ensure it is fit for the creation of statistical analysis and outputs for a wide range of stakeholders.

### **Vision**

The BCO will serve as Belize’s state-of-the-art national repository for the secure storage of comprehensive, multi-dimensional data relating to crime.

### **Mission**

The Belize Crime Observatory is established for the collection, processing, analysis, and storage of crime data, with a view of providing timely, reliable, and relevant information to its users. Data stored by the Observatory are collected from relevant sources and processed to ensure they are fit for the creation of statistical analysis and outputs for stakeholders.

### **Functions**

The primary aim of the Belize Crime Observatory is to foster the development of public policies that address public safety and national security issues through the collection, analysis and dissemination of quality, timely and multidimensional data on crime and violence trends in the country. The BCO is an official point of reference at the national, regional, and international level for comprehensive, relevant, and accurate data on crime and violence in Belize, including statistical and analytical information, as well as primary and secondary research.

### **Scope of work**

The BCO is responsible for:

- Collecting data from relevant sources
- Processing crime data to ensure quality and propriety
- Securely storing crime data
- Ensuring adequate access to relevant stakeholders
- Protecting sensitive and proprietary data and ensuring access only by authorized persons

- Generating statistical outputs and analyses for various user types, and
- Updating data to ensure accuracy and reliability.

## Goals

**GOAL #1:** Ensuring that crime data and information collected from authoritative sources are timely, multidimensional, comprehensive, reliable, and relevant.

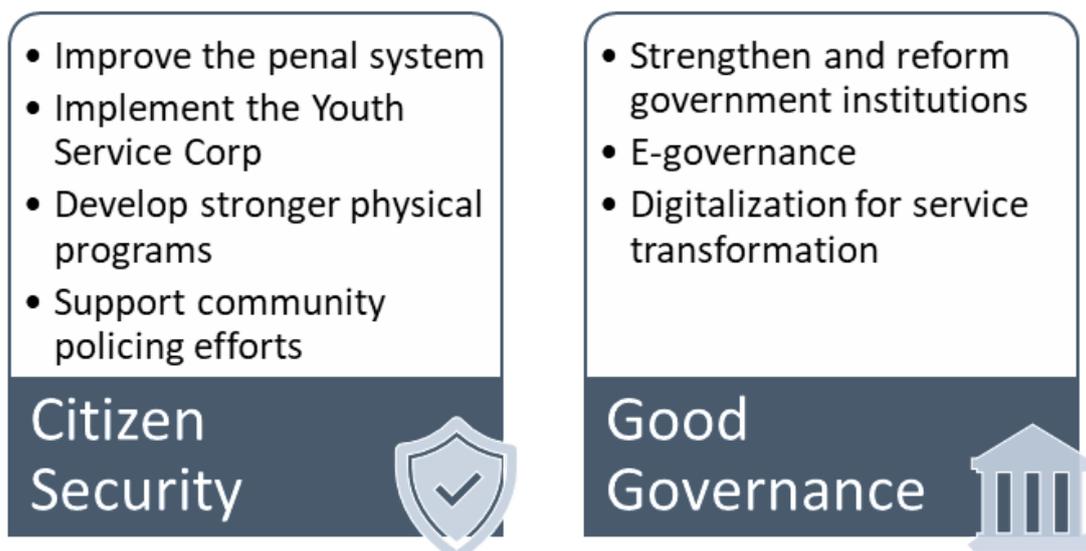
**GOAL #2:** Ensuring that data and information in the BCO’s Repository are suitable for the efficient performance of a diverse array of analysis functions, and to generate statistical outputs and indicators, unveiling meaningful insights into crime patterns and trends.

**GOAL #3:** Performing in-depth analysis of crime data, exploring key variables to provide greater insights into crime patterns and trends.

**GOAL #4:** Maintaining a Central Repository of authoritative and comprehensive crime data and information from a range of providers, as well as the BCO’s analysis and statistical outputs and periodic publications.

**GOAL #5:** Fostering a deeper understanding of crime patterns and trends in Belize and supporting improvements in public safety through the dissemination of quality data and insightful information.

The Ministry of Home Affairs & New Growth Industries places very high priority on innovation and technology, particularly in the context of leveraging Information and Communications Technology (ICT) resources to achieve greater impact through its efforts to improve citizen security in Belize. The Government of Belize has developed the Plan Belize – Medium Term Development Strategy (2021-2025), and the two priority thematic areas most relevant to the BCO’s work are Citizen Security and Good Governance.



## **BCO Key Results Achieved in Fiscal Year 2024 – 2025**

### **1. Assessment of Sexual Violence Legislation and Policy in Belize:**

This assessment and subsequent report set out to provide an overview of the existing legislation and to identify gaps and challenges with an aim to make recommendations on how to enhance institutional response. The report considers as reference, the standards set out in the UN Handbook on legislation for Violence Against Women and the Report on Access to Justice for women victims of Sexual Violence in Mesoamerica published by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The report also assesses the extent of the framework's compliance with international human rights standards and best practices and makes recommendations on how to enhance a whole-of-government response. As a direct outcome of this assessment the Sexual Assault Training for Medical Practitioners was held.

**2. Participation in Caribbean Statistics Day:** Under the theme "Improving Lives Through Statistics: Strengthening and Innovating Together", the BCO participated in activities that emphasized the importance of quality data in supporting informed decision-making and strategic planning for sustainable development both nationally and regionally. The activities further highlighted the critical role of statistics in addressing the social, environmental, and economic challenges facing the region, and from our end we focused on crime and violence.

### **3. Participation in the Regional Crime Observatory Forum for Caribbean States:**

The Regional Crime Observatory Forum brought together Caribbean states with a focus of enhancing regional efforts to improve data-driven decision-making in the Caribbean.

### **4. Knowledge Exchange with the Regional Crime Observatory of the Regional Security System of CARICOM:**

As a result of the Regional Crime Observatory Forum, representatives of the Regional Crime Observatory participated in a Study Visit to Belize to examine the data flow architecture between the BCO and its partners. It also created an opportunity to discuss industry knowledge, ideas, techniques, best practices, and lessons learned to advance the strategic priorities of the observatories.

## Challenges and Recommendations

KEY CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Limited ability to perform detailed analysis on a more regular basis, due to data formats and inadequate levels of sex, age, and other disaggregation, including incident data needed for more robust analysis;</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Coordinate with departments that provide data to the BCO to establish collaboration and capture the required data at established periodic intervals.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Inconsistent data management practices, resulting in inefficiencies in data management, particularly due to manual processes that are prone to errors, as well as the lack of proper protocols and procedures for data collection, entry, validation, and reporting;</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Seek support for departments to acquire modern information management systems to replace manual processes.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Maintaining consistent multi-channel stakeholder communications, both internal and external.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Establish periodic meetings with stakeholders to share information, validate data and address challenges.</li></ul>





## 3.6 Leadership Intervention Unit

### LIU Key Results Achieved in Fiscal Year 2024–2025

The Leadership Intervention Unit continues to be the premier outlet for communities, families and individuals that are negatively impacted as victims and perpetrators of the scourge of gang and gun violence in Belize. The program focuses primarily on peacebuilding and crime prevention on the pillars of rehabilitation, reformation and reintegration.

#### **Socio Economic Inclusion:**

##### **1. Community beautification program:**

Done in collaboration with the Belize City Council services several constituencies across Belize including Port Loyola, Collet, Freetown, Lake Independence, Pickstock and Fort George. It operates as a conditional cash transfer program servicing 350 clients and puts youth not in employment and education training back in control of their lives enabling them to take care of their families while instilling civic pride. This arrangement also integrates them into Belize's social security mechanism, some of them for the first time, as it is their first engagement with the formal workforce.

**2. Education programs** are tailored for persons with complex issues of exclusion. The TUBAL Technical and Vocational Institute has seen the graduation of 120 youth across cohorts 2 and 3 in the areas of Catering and Hospitality, Electrical, Automotive, Construction Cluster with as optional Cosmetology and AC/Refrigeration. These young persons after graduation receive course specific starter packages, job training by the Department of Youth Services and application assistance integrating them directly into the labour force.

**3. Integration into the Social Protection System:** Qualified persons are referred to the Community Rehabilitation Department to join the BOOST+ program.

**4. The Positive Moves 3.0:** done in collaboration with the Community Rehabilitation Department hosted a small cohort of 28 young persons some of whom are former client beneficiaries of the Leadership Intervention Unit. These young persons are trained and then placed in internship positions in industries ranging from tourism services, corporate to blue collar work. This collaboration where LIU provided salaries, technical and logistical oversight has been the most successful with a 70 % permanent employment rate.

**5. Nutritional Support Program** with the provision of 400+ food packages to various families across Belize City inclusive of Community Groups.

**6. The University Internship Program housed at LIU:** Young students across Belize's Tertiary Level institutions will be at the front lines of policy and action in the field of restorative and criminal justice and as such have hosted students from Galen University, University of Belize, UWI Global Campus, University of the West Indies Landed Campuses, University of Guyana and St. John's University even Wesley High School in the completion of graduation requirements. This has seen 20 students pass through the LIU receiving firsthand knowledge of the challenges in combating crime.

**7. Conflict Tracing and Mediation:** The hybrid team of civilian and police officers hosted 117 interventions with 440 disputants. In addition, the unit facilitated 37 high level mediations with 114 disputants.

### **Creating Safer Communities with Social Engagements:**

**1. Community Council Members** and has grown from the support of 8 to 11 community members and groups across the urban and peri urban areas of the Belize District.

**2. The William Dawson Peace and Sprite Cups:** success is rooted in corporate and interministerial partnership since there is partnership among the Ministry of Youth, Sports & Transportation, National Sports Council, Department of Youth Services, Eastern Police Division, Office of the Commissioner of Police, Belize City Council, Community Policing Unit and Behavioural Modification Conflict Management Services, Leadership Intervention Unit, Dolphin Production Ltd., Bowen & Bowen- Sprite, Powerade, Social Security Board, Rotary Club of Belize, Atlantic Bank and Central Bank.

Both Tournaments engaged over 500 sportsmen overall.

**3. The Hub Resource Centre:** Support of Summer Camp and Kriol Drumming Classes.

### **Institutional Strengthening:**

**1. Use of DigiWallet:** Revamping of the payment mechanism from physical cheques to e-wallets enabling financial inclusion for clients but also a systematic change that allow greater accountability and improved transparency

**2. Training of Staff:** Restore Belize offers mental health services to staff of the LIU and Training including Conflict Management, Communication and Social and Emotional Learning. And UWI Global Campus Training in Mediation, Project Management etc.





## **3.7** New Growth Industries

### **Vision**

A transformant economic landscape of Belize through diversification, standardization, and introduction of new and emerging industries, capitalizing on the demand for trending products on the local and international markets and opening new revenue streams for the government while creating jobs and opportunities for Belizeans.

### **Mission**

To create, establish and promote the legislative and operational framework for the introduction, growth, and development of new, innovative, trending, and productive non-traditional industries and to provide the necessary support for a favourable social, economic, and legal environment for those industries to thrive in Belize and external markets.

### **NGI Key Results Achieved in Fiscal Year 2024 – 2025**

#### **1. Strengthening the Hemp Industry:**

During the reporting year, the New Growth Industries Unit has made significant strides in formalizing and promoting the hemp industry as a viable and sustainable sector in Belize. One of the flagship achievements was the collaboration with Tropical Health Belize to support the official launch of their company, which introduced a range of hemp-derived medicinal and wellness products to the local market. This partnership not only marked a commercial milestone but also served as a public demonstration of the untapped potential within the hemp industry for health, wellness, and economic development.

To build national awareness and regional interest, the Unit rolled out a six-part national webinar series designed to inform and educate the public, prospective investors, and CARICOM partners about the benefits, regulations, and opportunities within the hemp industry. These sessions featured local and international experts and covered topics ranging from compliance and licensing to trade potential and medical applications.

#### **2. Re-establishment of the Cohune Industry:**

The New Growth Industries Unit has made progressive efforts to re-establish the Cohune industry. An industry deeply rooted in Belizean heritage and rich with untapped economic potential. One of the primary achievements was the facilitation of comprehensive stakeholder engagement sessions, to reintroduce and revitalize Cohune Limited. The Cohune Limited is exploring the viability of cohune harvesting and its potential for producing eco-friendly products, such as natural oils, cosmetic ingredients, and biodegradable materials.

### **3. Advancing the Seaweed Sector:**

Deepened collaboration with the Belize Seaweed Farmers Association, exploring formalization and investment promotion for value-added seaweed products. Partnered with BELTRAIDE and development agencies to support research, capacity building, and export readiness.

### **4. Promoting the Belize Film Industry:**

Preliminary consultations held with the Film Commissioner, private producers, and international partners to initiate film production industry and partnerships.

### **5. Visibility, Awareness, and Policy Development:**

The New Growth Industries Unit has focused on establishing foundational relationships and conducting targeted community engagements and stakeholder consultations with a range of emerging industries across the country. These engagements have provided valuable insight into local capacities, interest, and readiness across sectors such as hemp, seaweed, cohune, and film, while helping the Unit assess key gaps and opportunities for development.

### **3. Creation of a 5-Year Strategic Plan:**

The plan outlines short, medium, and long-term goals for each priority sector and aligns closely with Belize's national development priorities and the SDGs. It will serve as both a roadmap for action and a framework for monitoring measurable progress in advancing sustainable, innovative, and community-driven industries.





## 3.8 Firearms and Ammunition Control Board

The FACB was appointed 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The mandate of the board is to strengthen firearms regulations and management in Belize while adopting to international standards.

### FACB Key Results Achieved in Fiscal Year 2024 – 2025

**1. Implementation of a joint-effort vetting unit** comprised of representatives of the BDF and BPD.

**2. Continuous meetings with Internal Stakeholders:** Aimed at strengthening the coordination and efficiency of firearms and ammunition management in Belize. These meetings highlighted the importance of roles in the regulatory process and emphasized the Board's critical role in regulating the possession, use, and distribution of firearms and ammunition in Belize. Stakeholders also gained an understanding of the Board's mission, and the importance of a structured approach to firearms control.

Informed of the new process and set of procedures introduced to enhance the application, review and approval procedures. Additionally, compliance audits have been incorporated as a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure adherence to these procedures. These revised processes are designed to ensure more rigorous and transparent operations, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of firearm regulation.

**3. Audit on Firearms Management:** Acquired the support of the Auditor General's Office in conducting an Audit of Firearms Management prior to the Board's establishment.

**4. National Weapons and Ammunition Management baseline assessment** was conducted in August by the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) with the support of CARICOM IMPACS. This allowed us to comprehensively assess our Weapons and Ammunition policy, operational processes and capabilities in line with international, regional and subregional obligations and commitments as well as relevant international standards and technical guidelines.

**5. Study Visit to Jamaica Licensing Authority** to learn about best practices and strategies related to firearms control, public safety, and regulatory compliance. Through discussions and site visits, the FACB team gained an in-depth understanding of the operations and systems that have contributed to the success of the Jamaica Licensing Authority in these areas.

**6. Strengthened collaboration for information sharing** with the Customs and Excise Department.

**7. FACB facilitated Webinars:** to inform and engage the public on key topics, including firearms regulations, safety, mental health, and modernized management strategies. To create awareness, foster responsible ownership, and highlight the FACB's role in enhancing national security and public safety.

**8. Acquisition of a Firearms Management System** with the support of CARICOM IMPACS and the Mines Advisory Group. This firearms management system will allow the FACB to comprehensively manage lifecycles of firearms, essential components, controlled accessories, and ammunition.

## 4. Future Priorities and Plans

**Table 2: Future Priorities and Plans of MHANGI on Citizen Security and their relation to the UN SDGs**

No	ACTIVITY	SDGs
1	Implementation of the Ministry's Strategic Plan 2024 – 2029	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
2	Launch of the Police Record of Conduct Online system which aligns with the government's National Digital Agenda. This strategic initiative will modernize and streamline the process of applying for police records of conduct, with a focus on improving efficiency, security, and accessibility.	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
3	Enhance the Ministry's wellness program by expanding the Lotus Center countrywide to allow wider access to mental and emotional well-being services	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
4	Acquisition of a new modern Police Records Management Information System (PRMIS) which will replace the current Crime Information Management System (CIMS) which has become obsolete. The PRMIS will offers security and audit management, flexible user management, support documents and file retention, permits data sharing between police stations. And enforce standardized data collection.	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
5	Continue with the renovation efforts of police stations and sub-stations countrywide. This initiative is part of a broader strategy to enhance the infrastructure and facilities of the Belize Police Department, providing officers with modern and functional workspaces that support their operational needs.	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
6	Belize Police Department Recruit Intake for 2024 (Squad 98)	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

No.	ACTIVITY	SDGs
7	Continued support and network expansion of grassroots groups within Belize City to assist with the mentoring, feeding, positive socialization and education of children and youth in vulnerable communities.	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
8	Continuation of community intervention through Sports i.e William Dawson Digi-Sprite Cup and William Dawson Peace Cup that continues to provide a platform for athletic development and character building for participants with embedded life skills and interpersonal skills trainings.	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
9	The LIU will continue offering of vocational training opportunities to participants within the Community.	SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
10	Implementation of a reintegration program for those who encounter the law with the provision of mental health services, access to school re-entry support and job preparation/entrepreneurial services. Re-entry into high schools will be done with the support of school principals and counsellors to veer youth away from gangs and into positively reinforced social groups.	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
11	Continued emphasis on conflict tracing and mediation as a meaningful tool in the fight against gang and gun violence with the continued training and specialization of the police and civilian team of the LIU.	SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
12	Expungement and Adult Probation with the Community Rehabilitation Department	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
13	GED Program in collaboration with Civil Society Organizations	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
14	Psychosocial support with the Journey to Freedom Program	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
15	Expansion of Technological Integration to maintain operational readiness by: 1. Continued rollout of the National Camera Surveillance Systems to enhance real-time crime detection and prosecution. 2. Acquisition of a National 911 system via the CABEL Belize Integral Security Programme to enhance response to crime incidents 3. Strengthen cybercrime investigation by investing in the Digital Forensics Lab	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions - SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

No.	ACTIVITY	SDGs
16	Implementation of the New Growth Industries Strategy	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
17	Establish a Technical Working Group for the Cohune Industry to support the strategic development of the industry	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
18	Establishment of NGI Desk at BELTRAIDE	16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
19	Advocacy campaigns to address urban violence and youth-involved crimes, as well as gender-based violence, in line with the BCO's Advocacy Strategy and Advocacy Plan	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, with SDGs 5, 9, 10, 11 and 17
20	Upgrade and rollout use of the Sex Offenders Registry	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions - SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals
21	Develop proposals for legislative amendment for a more robust legal framework of the Belize Sex Offenders Registry	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, with SDGs 5, 9, 10, 11 and 17
22	Conduct annual countrywide stakeholder trainings for the Belize Police Department on topics such as collection of exhibits, exhibit packaging/handling and scope of forensic services.	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
23	Expand the scope of the Serology Section at Forensic Laboratory to include in-country Rapid DNA analysis.	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
24	Seek support to conduct a needs assessment and architectural design for a new Forensic Laboratory and Forensic Morgue.	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
25	Belize Central Prison will support the documentation and maintain an effective emergency management system and resources to respond to Prison emergencies.	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
26	Ensure a comprehensive healthcare monitoring via statistical reports at the Belize Central Prison.	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
27	Ensure that prisoners have access to the Visiting Justices System and that there is fluid communication between the Visiting Justices and the Ministry.	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
28	Acquisition of a firearm marking machine, inventory control mechanism and trainings	SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

## 5. Lessons Learnt

**1. Communication:** Given that the Ministry has expanded by establishing the New Growth Industries Unit and the Firearms and Ammunition Control Board, sharing information on efforts of the Departments and Units proved to be a challenge. To correct this, the Ministry now facilitates regular heads of departments and units' meetings that now enable information sharing and support for each other towards initiatives.

**2. Communication with the public and media:** The Ministry currently does not have a public relations or communications offer. Sharing of information with the public has been tasked to other technical officers within the Ministry. This has led to several initiatives, press releases, information on activities or regular updates not being shared. To correct this the Ministry is in the process of acquiring a public relations officer to improve its relationship with the public and media. The Ministry has also boosted its social media presence by sharing regular updates.

**3. Need for a Comprehensive Strategic Plan:** Strategic planning sessions help to identify and set goals, objectives and priorities. The Ministry developed its 5-year strategic plan and intends to host quarterly strategic meetings to allow heads of departments to provide updates on their quarterly work plans. This will ensure efficient use of resources to achieve the desired outcomes given budget allocation.

**4. Efficient budget planning:** to prepare for fiscal budgets, the Ministry with the support of the heads of departments and units, conduct forecasts of major initiatives with cost implications such as police recruit drives to allow for inclusion into budgetary allocations. Doing so allows for efficient budget preparation and use of government's funds.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

While the MHANGI records 2024 as a successful year in achievement, the Ministry did not do so without facing its many challenges. As such the Ministry will continue to better its efforts. The Ministry will continue to look after the welfare of its personnel and in doing so will continue to rehabilitate buildings and office spaces that suffer from poor lighting condition, infrastructural damage and improve overall working conditions. The health and well-being of every officer is vital and therefore it is the intent of the Ministry to work diligently to ensure a safe and healthy work environment is created.

The BPD will continue to use technology to support modern policing efforts. The rollout of surveillance cameras countrywide and use of drones will aid the department in maximizing the use and management of resources. The BPD will also continue to build the capacity of officers by providing opportunities to build their capacity in areas of defensive tactics, human rights, and dealing with people of vulnerable groups.

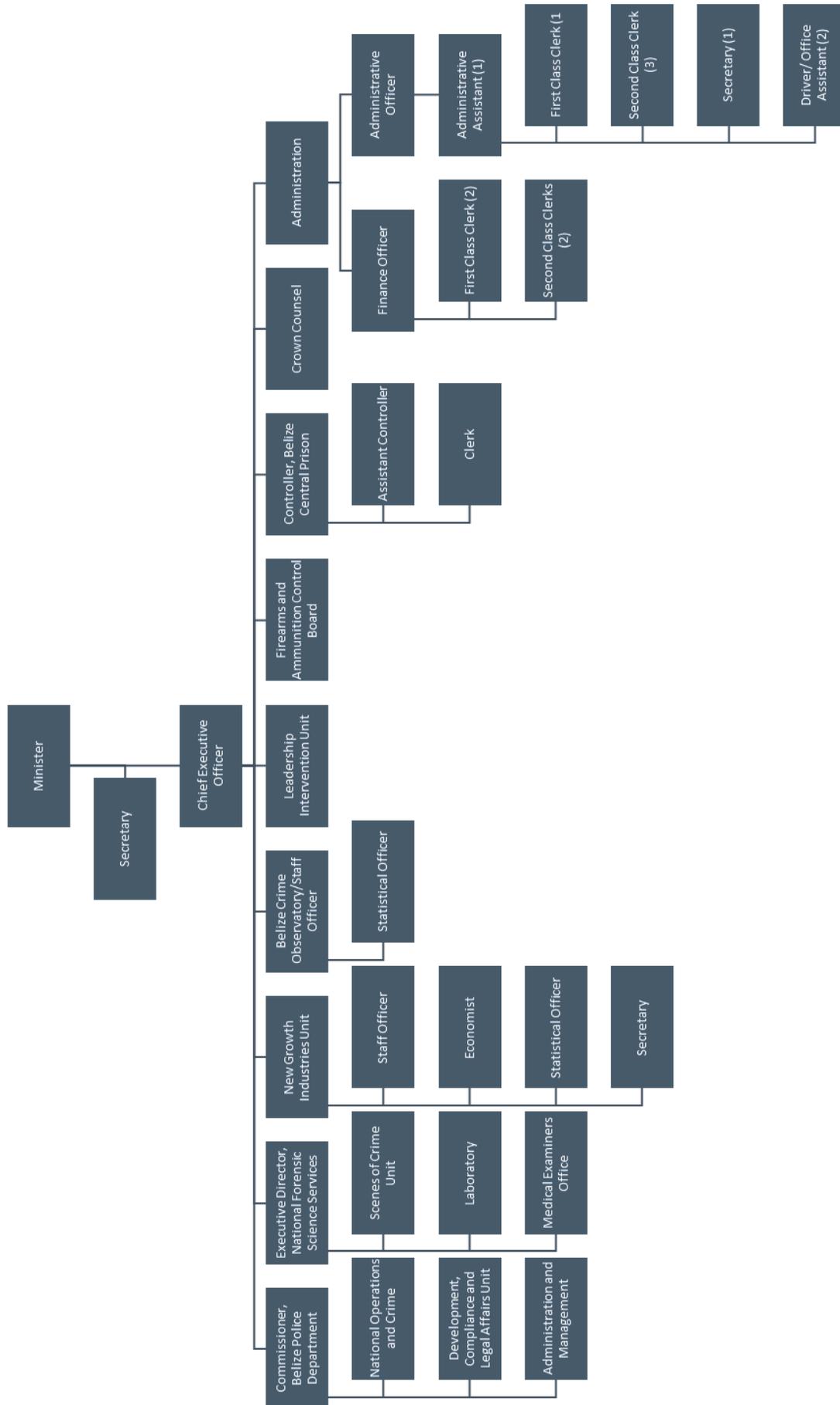
The NFSS, will continue the process of finalizing Belize's first DNA legislation that will see the establishment of a national DNA database that will facilitate the collection and use of DNA samples in the investigation and prosecution of criminal offences and in the investigation of missing person cases and unidentified human remains within Belize.

To support the departments and units of the Ministry, continued outreach and dialogue will be held with stakeholders including those of the diplomatic community. This will allow the strengthening of bilateral relations in delivering mutually beneficial programmes.

The MHANGI is committed to supporting and delivering on #planBelize 2.0 during the upcoming fiscal year and will do so with the support of the Ministry's departments and wider stakeholders who are vested to support crime reduction and promote citizen security.

# 7. Annexes

## Annex I: MHANGI Organogram 2024



# Annex II:

# MHANGI Summary of Budget for FY2024-2025

MINISTRY : MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS AND NEW GROWTH INDUSTRIES								
SECTION 1: MINISTRY SUMMARY								
<b>VISION:</b>								
A safe secure Belize, where the security environment allows for the development of a peaceful and democratic society that utilizes its human and natural resources to ensure social justice, ethnic harmony, security, stability, and prosperity.								
To change the economic landscape of Belize through diversification, standardization, and introduction of new and emerging industries, to capitalize on the demand for trending products on the local and international markets, and to open new revenue streams for the government while creating jobs and opportunities for Belizeans.								
<b>MISSION:</b>								
The Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries, working together with the private sector and civil society, will create and implement innovative and technologically-advanced systems that transform the Ministry's mission and vision into actions that will enable the rule of law and order and a society that is safe, secure and at peace with itself.								
A ministry working together with the private sector, civil society, and community to minimize threats to citizen security through the maintenance of law and order and community building.								
To create, establish, and promote the legislative and operational framework for the introduction, growth, and development of new, innovative, trending, and productive non-traditional industries and to provide the necessary support for a favorable social, economic, and legal environment for those industries to thrive in Belize and external markets.								
<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:</b>								
To maintain public order by responding to/and managing incidents of property crimes, domestic violence, and other crimes against persons, to reduce their impacts on the community.								
To promote safer communities through a multi-sectorial approach to alleviate gang-related activities.								
To ensure evidence-based policies and actions, in support of citizen security, including law and order, delivery of justice, and satisfactory redress to victims of crimes.								
Enforcement of the Gun Strategy and review of the existing Gun Reform (Firearm Application Fee) and Legislative Reform.								
Restructuring of the Gang Intelligence, Investigation, and Information Unit (GIU).								
Support radio programmes for more public engagement as part of their security.								
To provide evidence for the identification of suspects involved in alleged crimes.								
To provide reliable and objective scientific evidence based on established forensic principles.								
To foster the development of public policies that address citizen security through a comprehensive crime data and information system.								
To set up the administrative framework for any new emerging and non-traditional industries.								
To create private sector jobs for the Belizean people with the introduction of new and emerging industries.								
To engage local, regional, and international investors in the development and introduction of successful new and emerging industries in Belize.								
To establish a Central Nursery for scientific research, testing, and management of seeds and tissue culture for new and emerging products.								
To establish, implement, and enforce the highest standards and regulations for the efficient management of new and emerging industries and to ensure quality, consistency, and compliance through efficient monitoring systems to be established by the Ministry.								
PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE SUMMARY								
No.	Programme	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Budget Estimate	2023/24 Revised Estimate	2024/25 Budget Estimate	2025/26 Forward Estimate	2026/27 Forward Estimate
086	<b>POLICE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION</b>	\$4,468,839	\$6,893,308	\$8,154,656	\$8,233,746	\$9,255,235	\$8,382,427	\$8,417,437
	Recurrent Expenditure	\$2,313,094	\$2,366,340	\$3,307,776	\$2,780,642	\$3,877,045	\$3,716,083	\$3,751,093
	Capital II Expenditure	\$2,122,138	\$4,526,968	\$4,846,880	\$5,473,104	\$5,378,190	\$4,666,344	\$4,666,344
	Capital III Expenditure	\$33,607	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
087	<b>NATIONAL POLICE TRAINING ACADEMY</b>	\$3,635,328	\$2,571,384	\$2,332,776	\$3,349,664	\$2,744,106	\$2,563,191	\$2,642,953
	Recurrent Expenditure	\$3,635,328	\$2,571,384	\$2,332,776	\$3,349,664	\$2,744,106	\$2,563,191	\$2,642,953
	Capital II Expenditure	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Capital III Expenditure	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
088	<b>COMMUNITY POLICE SERVICES AND CRIME PREVENTION</b>	\$59,880,965	\$65,576,563	\$60,230,376	\$58,765,527	\$66,362,166	\$66,765,412	\$67,204,373
	Recurrent Expenditure	\$59,880,965	\$65,226,460	\$60,230,376	\$58,765,527	\$66,362,166	\$66,765,412	\$67,204,373
	Capital II Expenditure	\$0	\$350,103	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Capital III Expenditure	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
089	<b>CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION</b>	\$10,669,747	\$11,410,481	\$11,546,928	\$11,667,346	\$11,935,262	\$12,174,502	\$12,099,729
	Recurrent Expenditure	\$10,580,226	\$11,280,990	\$11,546,928	\$11,622,795	\$11,935,262	\$12,174,502	\$12,099,729
	Capital II Expenditure	\$89,521	\$46,315	\$0	\$44,551	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Capital III Expenditure	\$0	\$83,186	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
091	<b>NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE</b>	\$23,132,051	\$23,562,909	\$19,730,880	\$25,171,497	\$21,581,420	\$21,280,812	\$20,801,848
	Recurrent Expenditure	\$23,132,051	\$23,393,730	\$19,730,880	\$25,025,247	\$21,581,420	\$21,280,812	\$20,801,848
	Capital II Expenditure	\$0	\$169,179	\$0	\$146,250	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Capital III Expenditure	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL BUDGET CEILING</b>		\$101,786,930	\$110,014,644	\$101,995,616	\$107,187,780	\$111,878,189	\$111,166,344	\$111,166,339
	Recurrent Expenditure	\$99,541,664	\$104,838,893	\$97,148,736	\$101,523,875	\$106,499,999	\$106,500,000	\$106,499,995
	Capital II Expenditure	\$2,211,659	\$5,092,564	\$4,846,880	\$5,663,905	\$5,378,190	\$4,666,344	\$4,666,344
	Capital III Expenditure	\$33,607	\$83,186	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SUMMARY OF RECURRENT EXPENDITURE								
		2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Budget Estimate	2023/24 Revised Estimate	2024/25 Budget Estimate	2025/26 Forward Estimate	2026/27 Forward Estimate
230:PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS		\$77,374,641	\$82,990,661	\$73,316,556	\$76,344,948	\$78,508,671	\$79,648,178	\$80,203,730
231:TRAVEL & SUBSISTENCE		\$787,794	\$804,487	\$962,328	\$961,716	\$1,131,839	\$1,088,912	\$1,086,418
340:MATERIALS & SUPPLIES		\$4,947,417	\$4,516,711	\$4,968,360	\$5,291,486	\$6,263,593	\$6,148,994	\$6,109,888
341:OPERATING COSTS		\$4,711,605	\$5,409,087	\$6,518,436	\$6,548,519	\$6,952,023	\$6,889,653	\$6,925,014
342:MAINTENANCE COSTS		\$3,393,166	\$3,173,050	\$3,658,296	\$3,520,048	\$4,829,786	\$4,589,131	\$4,593,674
343:TRAINING		\$192,377	\$161,450	\$285,804	\$225,915	\$175,809	\$171,459	\$166,684
346:PUBLIC UTILITIES		\$772,161	\$769,777	\$805,272	\$800,874	\$845,566	\$846,865	\$846,865
348:CONTRACTS & CONSULTANCY		\$7,299,228	\$6,964,585	\$6,470,028	\$8,968,324	\$7,615,675	\$6,939,972	\$6,390,886
349:RENTS & LEASES		\$12,313	\$16,915	\$25,856	\$26,803	\$38,836	\$38,836	\$38,836
350:GRANTS		\$50,942	\$32,170	\$138,000	\$85,242	\$138,000	\$138,000	\$138,000
<b>TOTAL RECURRENT EXPENDITURE</b>		\$99,541,664	\$104,838,893	\$97,148,736	\$101,523,875	\$106,499,999	\$106,500,000	\$106,499,995
STAFFING RESOURCES (MINISTRY)								
<b>Managerial/Executive</b>		61	61	61	79	71	72	72
<b>Technical/Front Line Services</b>		1,652	1,652	1,652	1,839	2,176	2,180	2,180
<b>Administrative Support</b>		185	185	185	204	143	143	143
<b>Non-Established</b>		2	2	2	2	26	26	26
<b>Statutory Appointments</b>		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL STAFFING</b>		1900	1900	1900	2124	2416	2421	2421

# Annex III: Belize Crime Observatory (BCO) Statistical Report 2024



## BELIZE CRIME OBSERVATORY

Interpreting, Informing, Influencing

### STATISTICAL REPORT

2024



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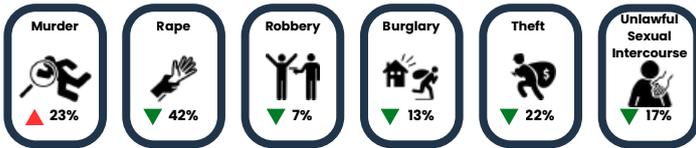


# Crime at a glance

## MAJOR CRIMES

➤ Police recorded 1,062 major crimes during 2024. This reflected a decrease of 18% relative to 2023. That is a total of 231 more major crime records compared to 2023.

➤ During 2024, all categories of major crimes recorded a decrease except for Murders.



## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

➤ During 2024, the police registered cases of Gender-Based Violence in selected categories, which included 1,277 Domestic Violence cases, 51 Unlawful Sexual Intercourse cases, and 33 Rape cases.



## ROAD TRAFFIC FATALITIES

➤ In 2024, there were 112 fatal road traffic accidents. January, April, and December recorded the highest number of fatal road traffic accidents, with 16, 15, and 16, respectively. June and August recorded the least number of fatal road traffic accidents, with 5 each.

## DROWNINGS

➤ In 2024, there were 27 drowning incidents recorded. This represents an increase of 42% compared to the previous year.

Disclaimer: The BCO uses reasonable efforts to provide accurate and up-to-date information however, some of the information found on this report may be susceptible to change.

## MURDERS/MURDERS IN BELIZE CITY

➤ The murder rate for 2024 is 21.7 victims per 100,000 population. During 2024, there were 89 murders recorded by the Belize Police Department. Murders increased by 2% when compared to 2023.

➤ Belize City's murder rate has been on a constant decline since 2022, representing a decline of 16 victims per 100,000 population when compared to 2023.



Approximately 9 in 10 murder victims were males.

## MISSING PERSONS

➤ In 2024, there were 124 missing persons. This represents a decrease of 2% compared to the previous year.

➤ In 2024, 6 in 10 missing persons were females. While the number of female missing persons decreased, male missing persons increased.

## INCARCERATION

➤ As of 31st December 2024, there were 1,259 inmates at the Belize Central Prison, of whom 852 were convicted and 407 were remanded.



## SUICIDES

➤ In 2024, there were 27 suicides recorded. This represents a decrease of 39% compared to the previous year.

➤ The number of suicides decreased for both males and females in 2024; however, the male victims of suicide were 8 percentage points higher when compared to 2023.

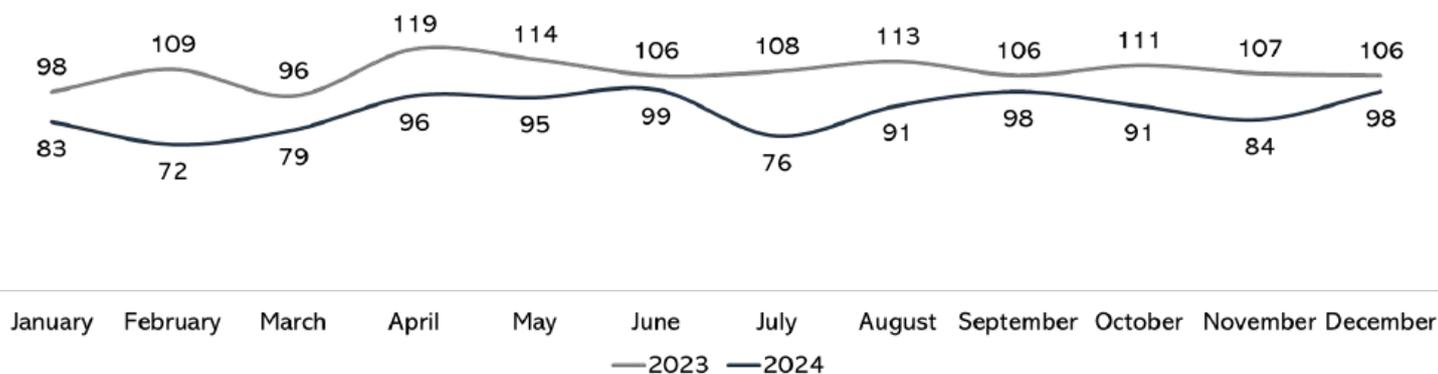


# Major Crimes

Police recorded 1,062 major crimes during 2024. This reflected a decrease of 18% relative to 2023. That is a total of 231 more major crime records compared to 2023.

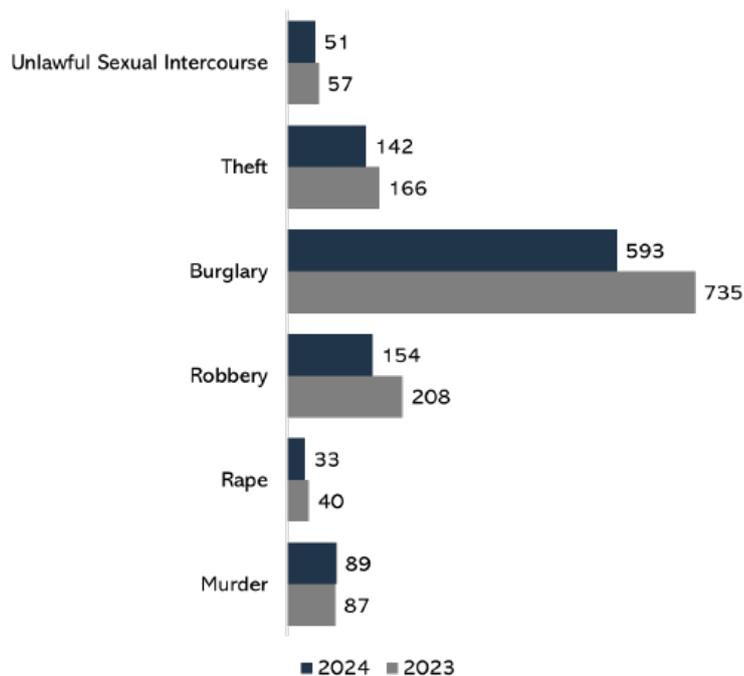


## Total number of major crimes by month (2023 vs. 2024)



A decrease in Major Crimes throughout the entire year was observed. The greatest decrease in major crimes for 2024 was recorded in February and July, with a decrease of 34% (37 less reports) and 30% (32 less reports), respectively.

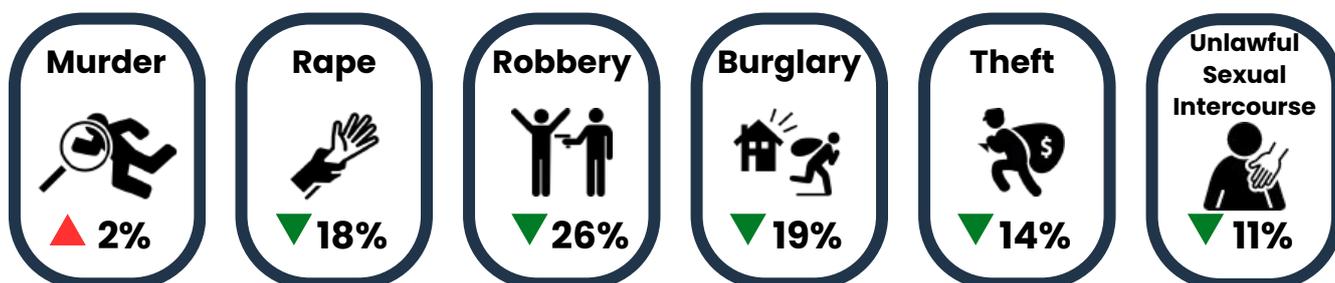
## Total number of major crimes by category



During 2024, all categories of major crimes recorded a decrease except for Murders.

Murders increase by 2% compared to 2023. This is 2 more murder victims.

Burglary accounted for 56% of the major crimes. There was a decrease of 19% in burglary reports. This is 142 fewer Burglary records compared to 2023.



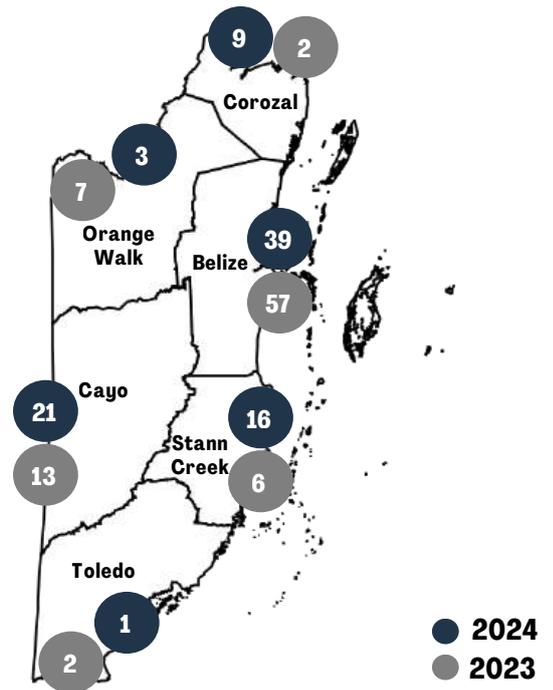
# Murders

The murder rate for 2024 is 21.7 victims per 100,000 population. During 2024, there were 89 murders recorded by the Belize Police Department. Murders increased by 2% when compared to 2023.

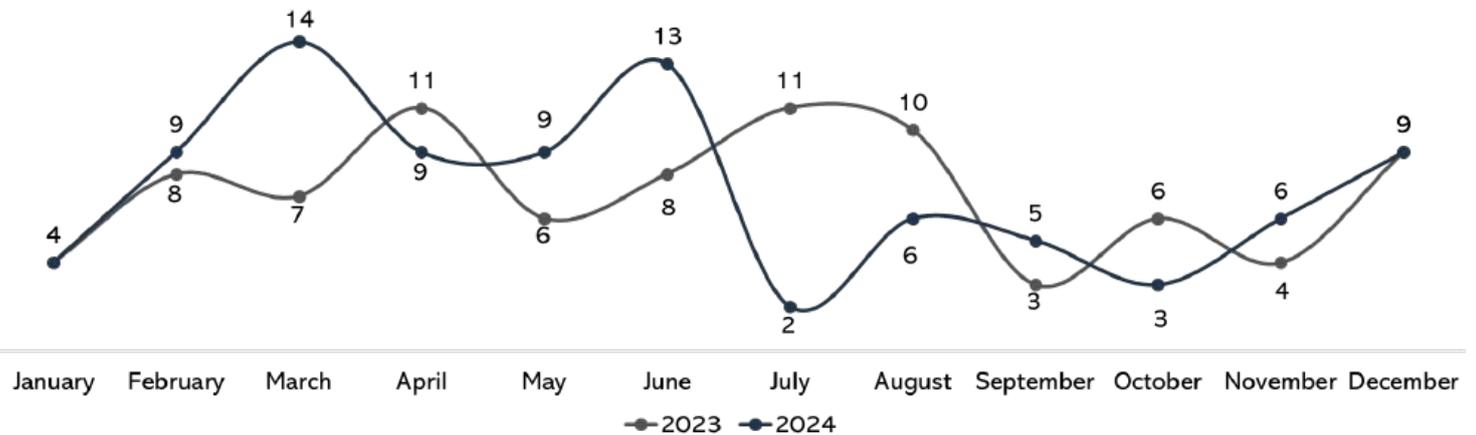
In 2024, the Belize District accounted for 44% of the murder incidents recorded; the Cayo District accounted for 24%; the Orange Walk District accounted for 3%; the Stann Creek District accounted for 18%; the Corozal accounted for 10%; and the Toledo District accounted for 1% of the murder incidents.

There was a drastic decrease in the Belize District of 32% when compared to 2023. Note that a State of Emergency took effect on June 24, 2024, in parts of the Belize and Cayo Districts. This SOE ran for a period of 90 days, concluding in September 2024. This policy decision could be the leading factor that contributed to the decrease in Murders during that period.

## Murder incidents by district

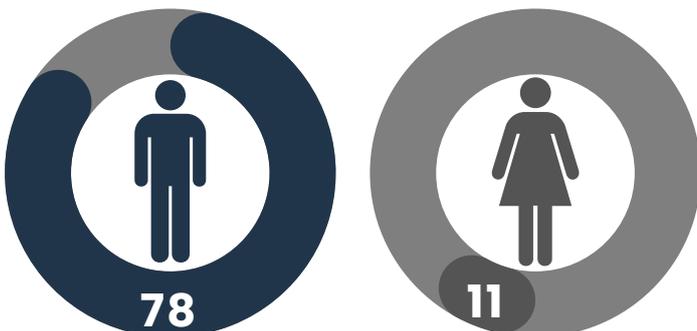


## Total number of murders by month (2023 vs. 2024)

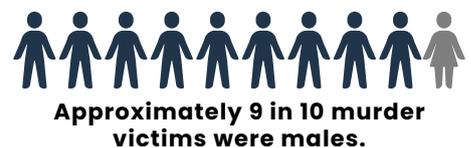


The months with the greatest number of murder victims reported from January to December 2023 were March and June, with 14 and 13 murders, respectively. Both these months accounted for a large increase of 100% and 63%, respectively. In July, there was a drastic decrease in murder incidents of 82%.

## Murder victims by sex

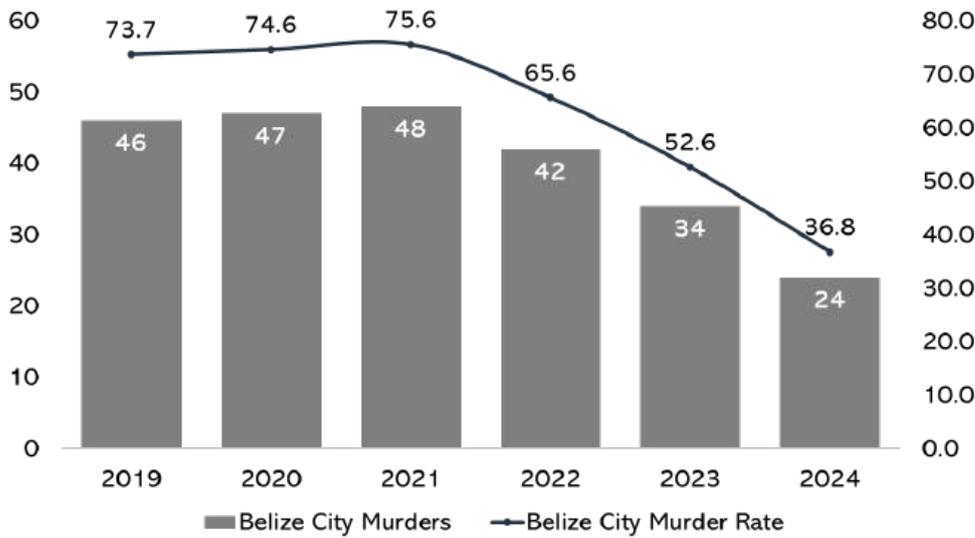


During 2023, there were 78 male victims and 11 female victims of murder.



# Murders in Belize City

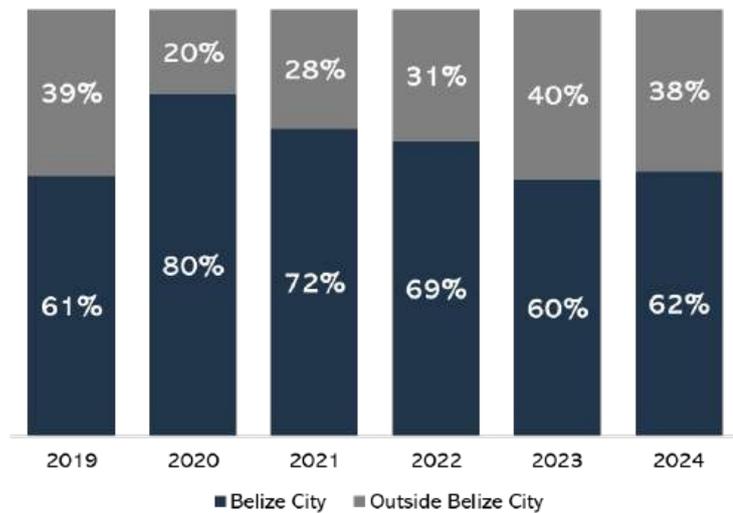
**Murder rate in Belize City (2019-2024)**



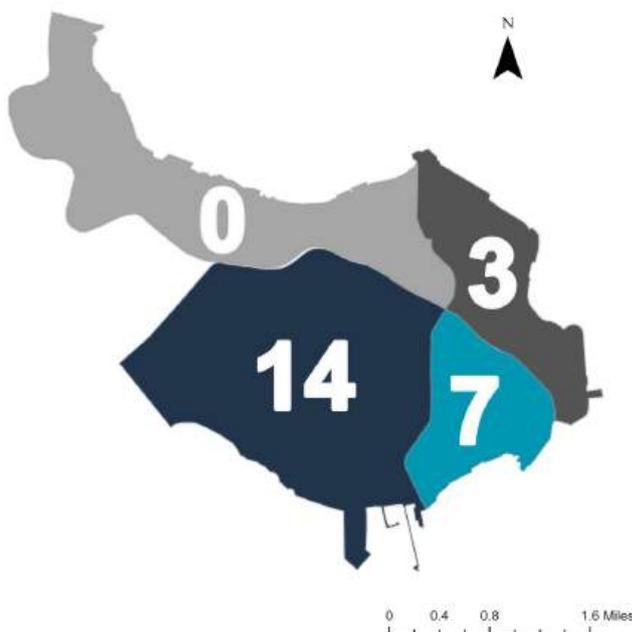
Belize City's murder rate has been on a constant decline since 2022, representing a decline of 16 victims per 100,000 population when compared to 2023.

**Total Percentage of Murders in Belize City (2019-2024)**

During 2024, 62% of the Belize District murders were recorded in Belize City, while 38% of the murders were recorded outside Belize City, representing a decrease of 2 percentage points for murders recorded outside Belize City and an increase of 2 percentage points for murders recorded in Belize City compared to 2023.



**Total Belize City Murders by precinct**



In 2024, police recorded 14 murders in Precinct 2. This represents 58% of the murders recorded in Belize City.

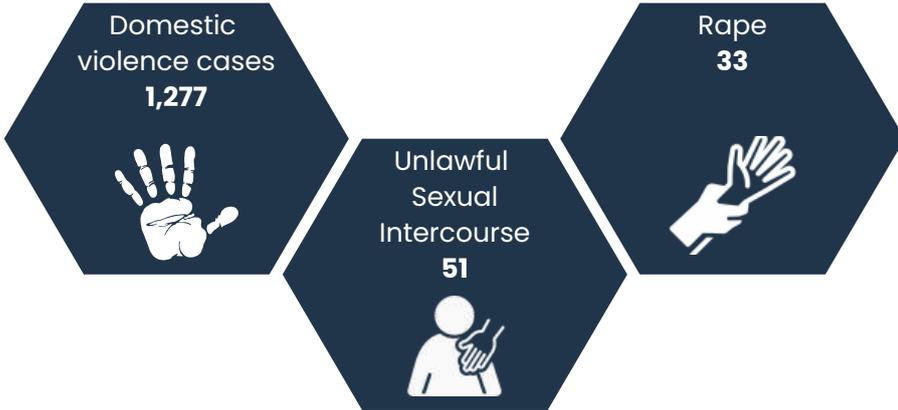
In Precinct 1, there were 7 murders recorded, which accounted for 29%.

In Precinct 3 there were 3 murders recorded, while Precinct 4 recorded zero murders during 2024.



# Gender-Based Violence

## Gender-Based Violence cases by selected categories



During 2024, the police registered cases of Gender-Based Violence in selected categories, which included 1,277 Domestic Violence cases, 51 Unlawful Sexual Intercourse cases, and 33 Rape cases.

*Note: Not all domestic violence reports result in cases*

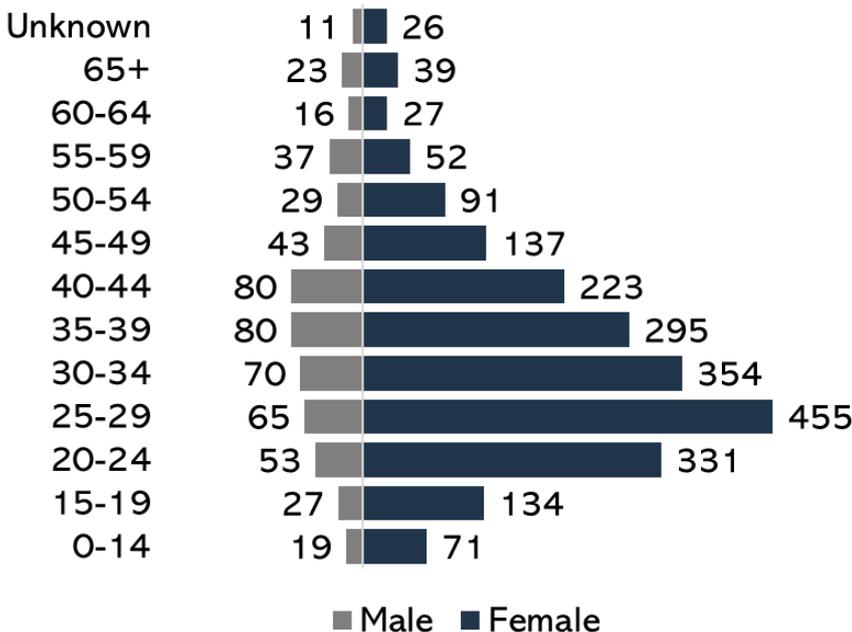
## Domestic Violence reports by month (2023 vs. 2024)



January February March April May June July August September October November December  
 — Jan-Dec 2024 — Jan-Dec 2023

A total of 2,788 Domestic Violence reports were filed during 2024. This was a decrease of 7% relative to 2023, with a total of 205 fewer reports in 2024. May and September 2024 accounted for the largest decrease compared to the same period in 2023, with 19% and 20%, respectively.

## Domestic Violence reports by age group and sex (2024)



During 2024, approximately 8 in 10 reports were made by females.

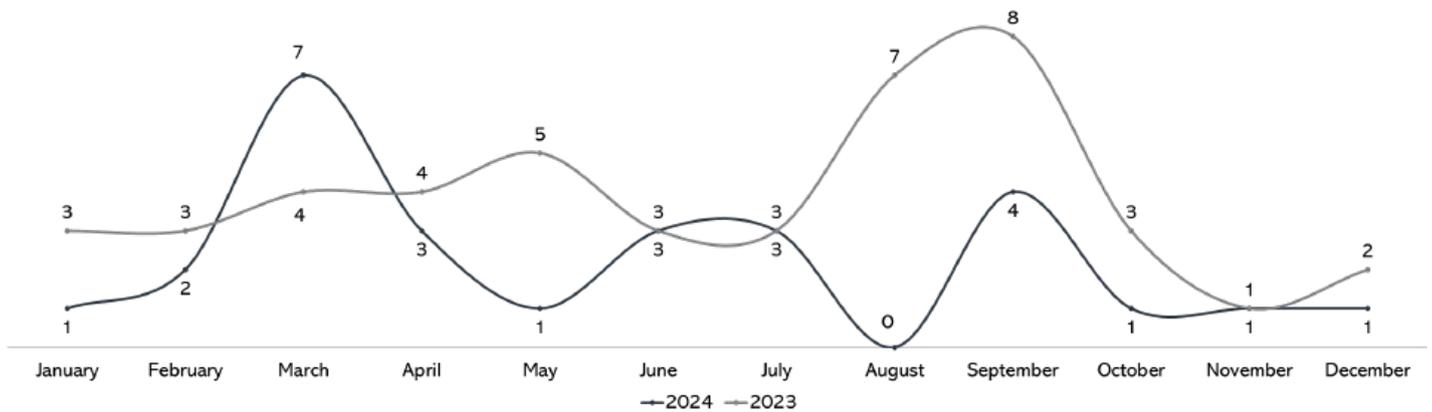
Most reports were filed by females aged 20 to 44 years, which accounted for 74% (1,658) of the female complainants.

Similarly, for males, the largest percentage of Domestic Violence male complainants were between the ages of 20 and 44 years. This accounted for 63% (348) of the male complainants.



# Suicides

## Total number of suicides by month (2023 vs. 2024)



In 2024, there were 27 suicides recorded. This represents a decrease of 41% (19 fewer suicides) compared to the previous year. March was the only month to record an increase, with 3 more suicides in 2024 compared to March 2023.

## Total number of suicides by district (2023 vs. 2024)

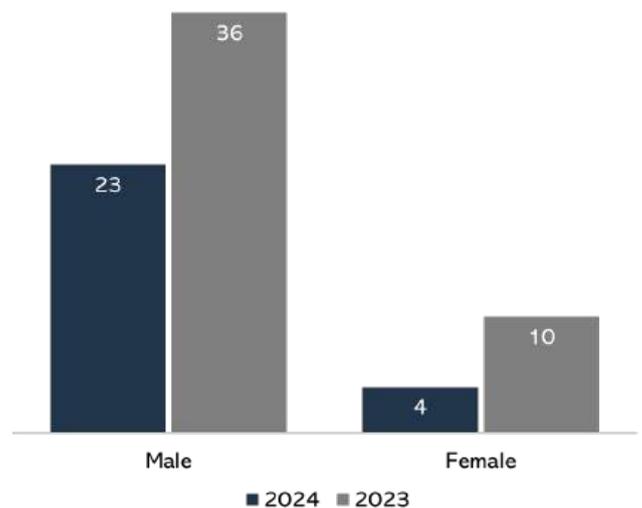


In 2024, the Belize and Cayo Districts accounted for the largest number of suicides (8 suicides each). The Belize District increased by 14% (1 suicide), while the Cayo District accounted for no change.

The Orange Walk and Stann Creek Districts accounted for the largest decreases in suicide with 82% and 77%, respectively.

Both the Corozal District resulted in no change in the number of deaths by suicide in 2024 when compared to 2023.

## Total number of suicides by sex



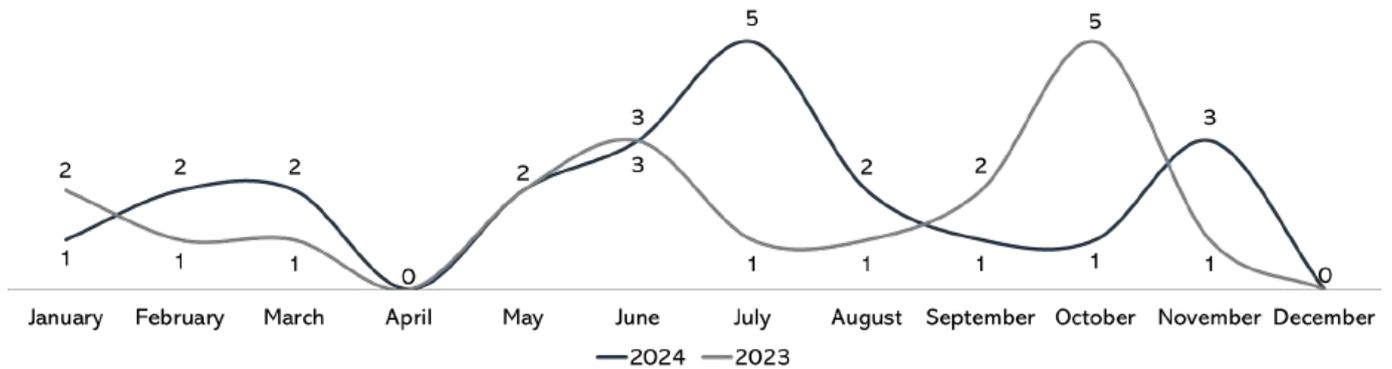
During 2024, 23 of the victims of suicide were males. This accounted for 85% of suicides.

The number of suicides decreased for both males and females in 2024; however, the male victims of suicide were 8 percentage points higher when compared to 2023, where males accounted for 77% of the deaths by suicide.



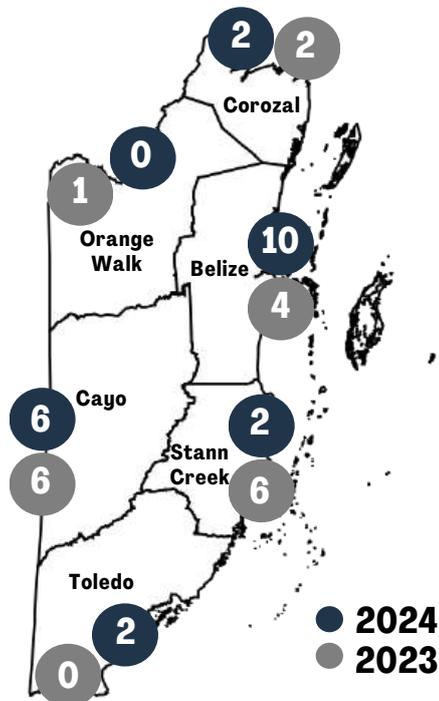
# Drownings

## Total number of drownings by month (2023 vs. 2024)



In 2024, there were 22 drowning incidents recorded. This represents an increase of 16% compared to the previous year. July observed the largest count of drowning incidents in 2024. This was also an increase of 4 drowning incidents when compared to the same period in 2023.

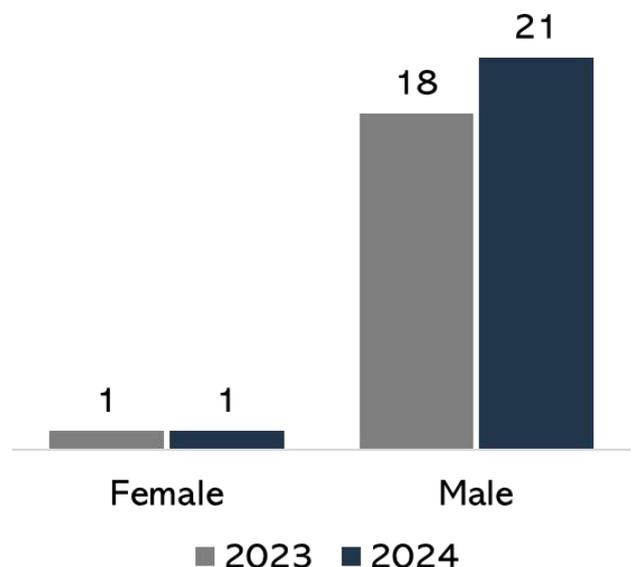
## Total number of suicides by district (2023 vs. 2024)



In 2024, the Belize District accounted for the largest number of drowning incidents (10 drownings). This represents an increase of 150% compared to 2023.

The Cayo District recorded the second highest count of drowning incidents with 6 drownings but accounted for no change when compared to 2023.

## Total number of suicides by sex



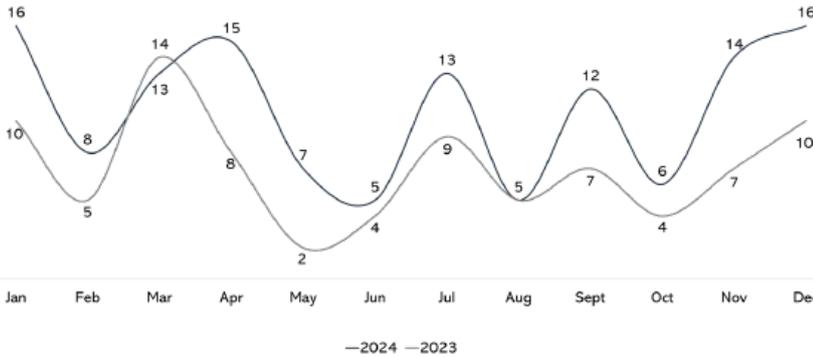
During 2024, 95% of the victims of drownings were males (21 drownings).

The number of drowning incidents increased for males, while females resulted in no change in 2024.



# Road Traffic Fatalities

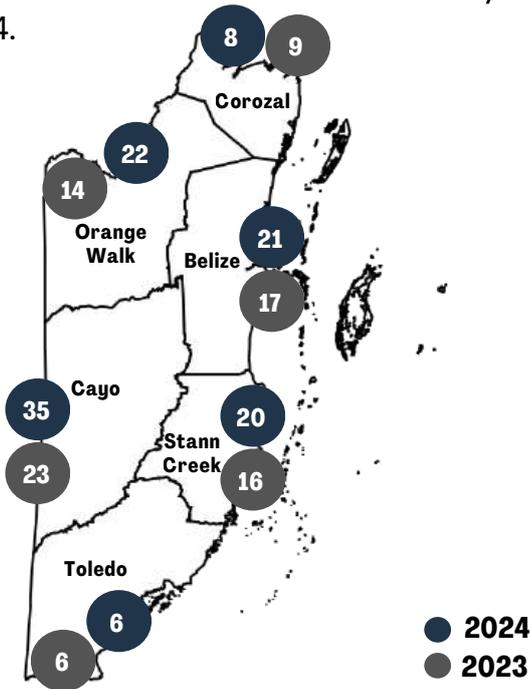
## Fatal Road Traffic Accidents by month (2023-2024)



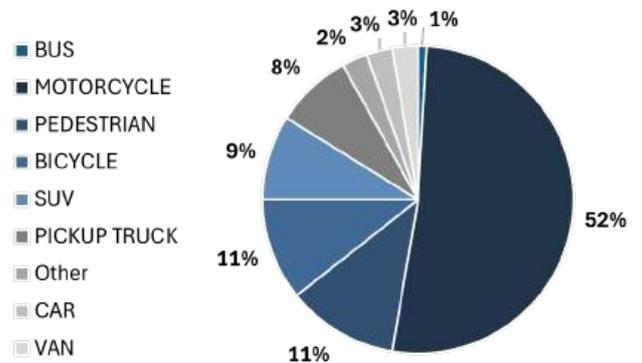
In 2024, there were 112 fatal road traffic accidents. January, April, and December recorded the highest number of fatal road traffic accidents, with 16, 15, and 16, respectively. June and August recorded the least number of fatal road traffic accidents, with 5 each.

## Fatal Road Traffic Accidents by district

The Cayo District recorded the largest count (35) of fatal road traffic accidents in 2024, followed by the Orange Walk District with 22 fatal road traffic accidents. The Toledo District (6) recorded the fewest fatal road traffic accidents for the year 2024.

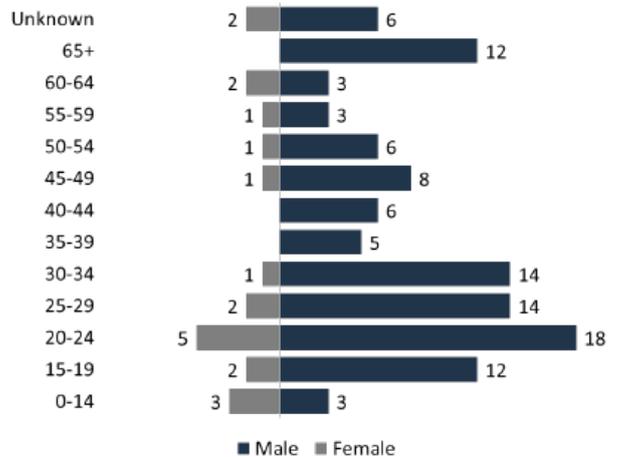


## Fatal Road Traffic Accidents by Mode of Transportation



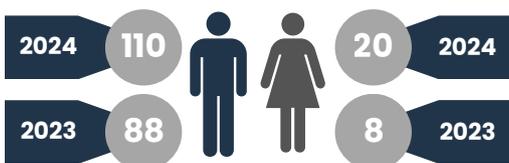
During 2024, the vehicle types that recorded the largest count of fatal road traffic accidents were motorcycles accounting to 52%.

## Road Traffic Fatalities by age group and sex



The largest count of male victims were between 20 and 24 years old (18). Similarly, the largest count of female victims were between 20 and 24 years old (5).

## Road Traffic Fatalities by victim sex



Males accounted for the majority of the victims of fatal road traffic accidents.



# Incarceration

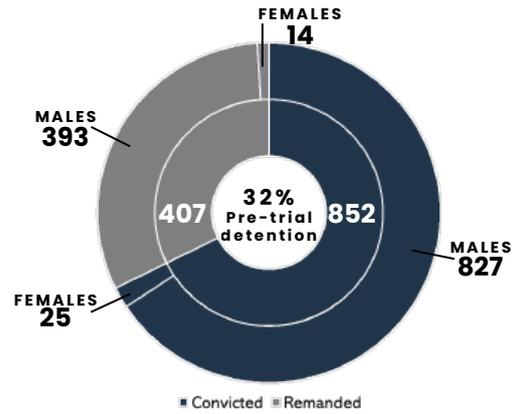


**1,259**

**INMATES**

## Number of inmates remanded and convicted

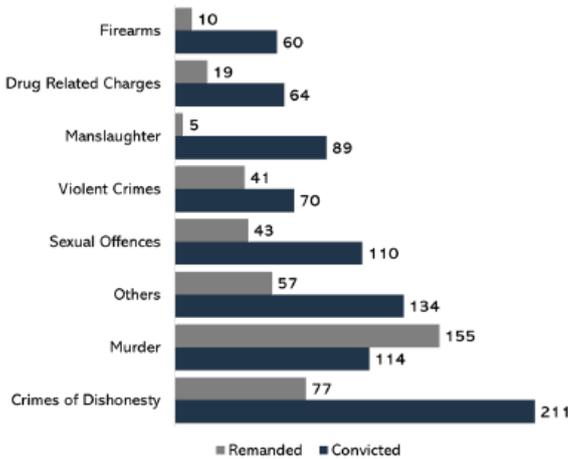
As of 31st December 2024, there were 1,259 inmates at the Belize Central Prison, of whom 852 were convicted and 407 were remanded.



Of the convicted inmates, 827 were males and 25 were females. Of the remanded inmates, 393 were males and 14 were females.

**16%** of the inmates are gang members.

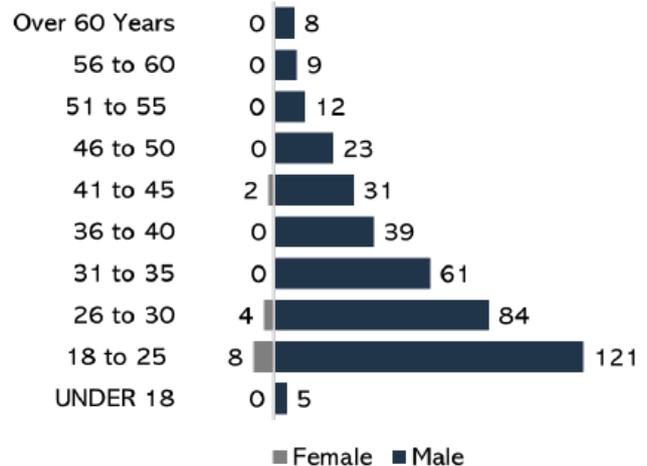
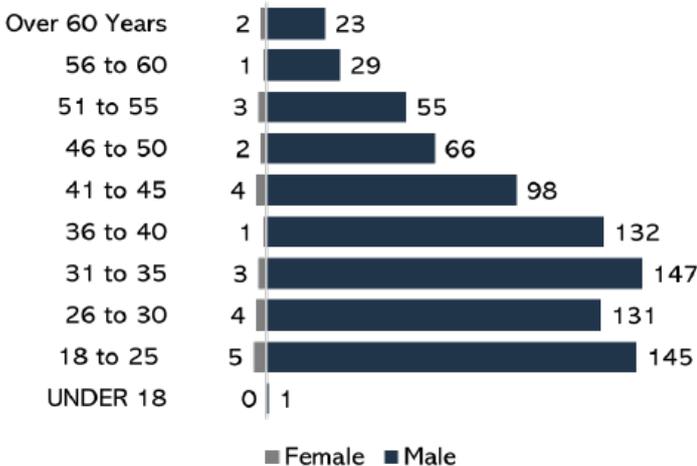
## Incarceration by offences



In 2024, inmates were most commonly remanded or convicted for crimes of dishonesty, murder and sexual offences.

There were 288 inmates remanded or convicted for crimes of dishonesty, 269 inmates remanded or convicted for murder, and 153 inmates remanded or convicted for sexual offences.

## Convicted (left) and Remanded (right) inmates by sex and age group



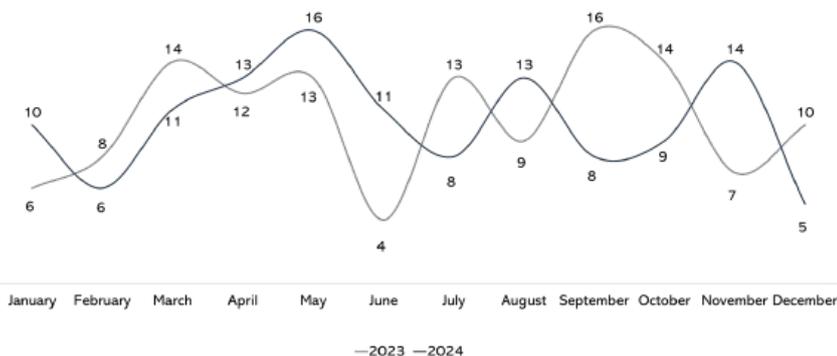
67% of the convicted males were between the ages of 18 and 40. The amount of convicted females was not specific to an age group.

68% of the remanded males were between the ages of 18 and 35. Whereas 86% of females remanded were between the ages of 18 and 30.



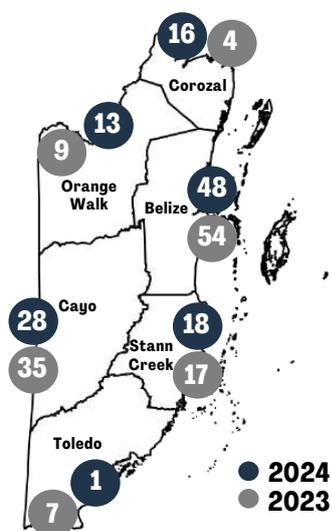
# Missing Persons

## Total number of missing persons by month (2023 vs. 2024)



In 2024, there were 124 missing persons. This represents a decrease of 2% compared to the previous year. September and October accounted for the largest decreases of missing persons recorded for 2024.

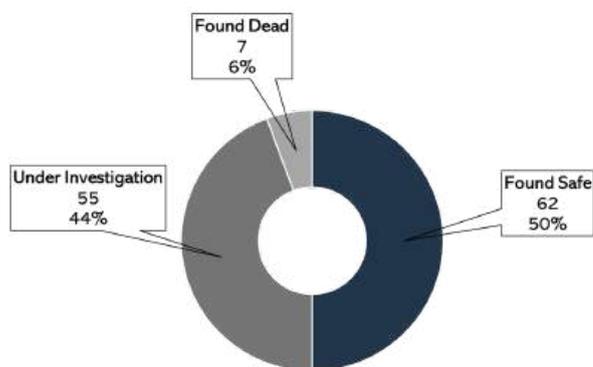
## Total number of missing persons by district (2023 vs. 2024)



In 2024, the majority of the districts decreased in the number of missing persons except for the northern districts.

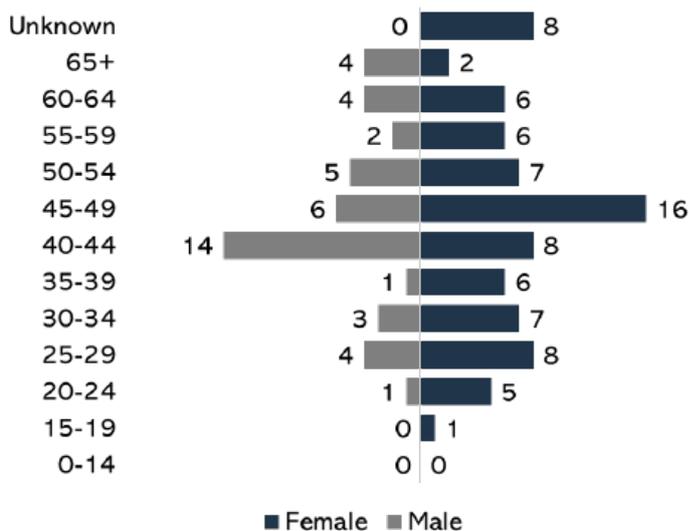
The Corozal district recorded the highest increase in missing persons, with a 300% increase, followed by the Orange Walk district with a 44% increase in missing persons.

## Total number of missing persons by status (2023 vs. 2024)



During 2024, 50% of the missing persons were found safe, 44% are under investigation, and 6% were found dead.

## Total number of missing persons by age and sex (2024)



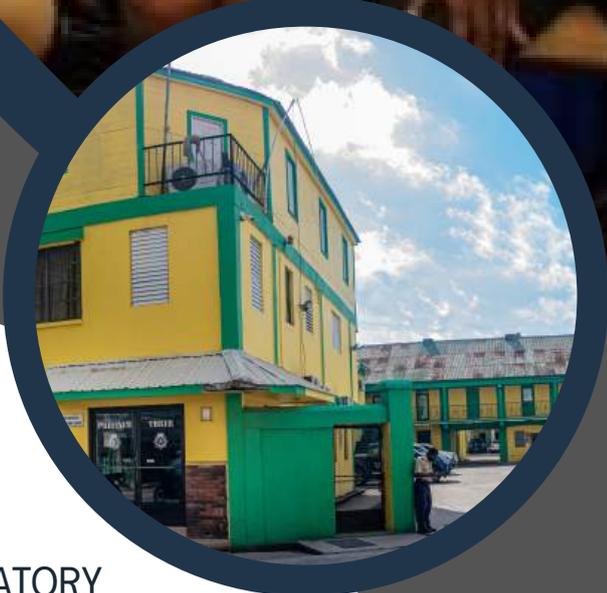
The largest percentage of female missing persons were between 45 and 49 years old. Meanwhile, for males, the largest percentage of missing persons were between 40 and 44 years old.

## Total number of missing persons by sex



In 2024, 6 in 10 missing persons were females. While the number of female missing persons decreased, the number of male missing persons increased.





**BELIZE CRIME OBSERVATORY**  
Ministry of Home Affairs & New Growth Industries

Data sources: Belize Police Department through the Joint Intelligence Coordinating Center, Belize National Forensic Science Service, Belize Central Prison (Kolbe Foundation), Statistical Institute of Belize

Any future revisions will be noted in subsequent reports

If you would like to learn more about the BCO or get more information contact us at:



